Understanding the Early Years

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Results of the Community Mapping Study for Children in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Debra Kuzbik, Linda Nosbush and Tom Sutherland
Applied Research Branch
Strategic Policy
Human Resources Development Canada

April 2002

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The format of this report, along with many selections of text were taken from a draft report prepared by Human Resources Development Canada entitled *Results of the Community Mapping Study for North York* (September 2000), by Sarah Connor, Christina Norris and Sidney McLean.

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1. Helping Communities Give Children the Best Possible Start

The young—our hope, our promise, our future. At one time it seemed wise, and perhaps even cost-efficient, to measure a nation's well being in terms of its economic prosperity. However, recent brain research has demonstrated that using economic prosperity as the sole measure of national success is not sufficient. Mustard and Lipsitt (1999) observed that "the quality of early childhood affects the quality of the future population and prosperity of the society in which these children are raised." (xi). Therefore, any nation planning a robust future must, of necessity, carefully orchestrate the care and nurturing of its youngest citizens if it wants to ensure future success. Given the critical role of the early years in shaping a child's future capacity, the seminal question becomes "How well are young children doing?" Answering this question is a key component to both ensuring and sustaining our nation's – and our own community's – prosperity.

To help answer the question of how well young children are doing, it is essential to both:

- improve our understanding of the factors that help or hinder child development;
- increase community capacity to track how well children are developing.

These are two pivotal goals of the Understanding the Early Years Project.

Understanding the Early Years (UEY), developed by the Applied Research Branch of Human Resources Development Canada, emerged in response to a growing recognition that the kind of nurturing and attention that children receive in early childhood can have a major impact on the rest of their lives.

Researchers have found that the early years of development from before birth to age six set the base for competence and coping skills that will affect learning, behaviour and health throughout life. These early years are critical for children's development as they shape long-term outcomes, not only related to academic and employment success, but also to children's overall health, quality of life, and ability to adapt (see McCain & Mustard, 1999 and Doherty, 1997 for a discussion of additional current research in this area).

The critical nature of the early years was emphasized by UNICEF in its publication *The State of the World's Children 2001*. This report summarized the importance of ages 0 to 3 years as follows:

> In the first moments, months and years of life, every touch, movement and emotion in a young child's life translates into an explosion of electrical and chemical activity in the brain, as billions of cells are organizing themselves into networks requiring trillions of synapses between them. These early childhood years are when experiences and interactions with parents, family members and other adults influence the way a child's brain develops, with as much impact as such factors as adequate nutrition, good health and clean water. And how the child develops during this period sets the stage for later success in school and the character of adolescence and adulthood. When infants are held and touched in soothing ways, they tend to thrive. Warm, responsive care seems to have a protective function, to some extent 'immunizing' an infant against the effects of stress experienced later in life. But the brain's malleability during these early years also means that when children do not get the care they need, or if they experience starvation, abuse or neglect, their brain development may be compromised. The effects of what happens during the prenatal period and

during the earliest months and years of a child's life can last a lifetime. All the key ingredients of emotional intelligence – confidence, curiosity, intentionality, self-control, relatedness, capacity to communicate and cooperativeness that determine how a child learns and relates in school and in life in general, depend on the kind of early care he or she receives from parents, pre-school teachers and caregivers. It is, of course, never too late for children to improve in their health and development, to learn new skills, overcome fears or change their beliefs. But, as is more often the case, when children don't get the right start, they never catch up or reach their full potential (page 11).

What is Understanding the Early Years?

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a national initiative that provides research information to help strengthen the capacity of communities to make informed decisions about the best policies and most appropriate programs to offer families with young children. Designed to assist communities across Canada in achieving their goal of improving early child development, UEY provides communities with the necessary information to enhance or adapt community resources and services. It gives communities knowledge of how childhood experiences shape learning, health and well-being and enables them to track how well their children are doing. With this information, communities can work towards optimizing child development through the strategic mobilization of resources and programs.

(Connor, Norris, & McLean, 2000)

UEY seeks to provide information about the influence of community factors on children's development and to enhance community capacity to use these data to both monitor early childhood development and to create effective community-based responses.

The initiative builds on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), a joint Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada research program. The NLSCY, which began data collection in 1994, is the definitive source of national longitudinal data for research on child development in Canada. Its purpose is to increase our knowledge about the factors affecting child development and well-being.

Initial research on child development has shown that community factors may impact child outcomes, but only further research can illustrate the magnitude of the impact and the mechanisms through which it occurs (Kohen, Hertzman, & Brooks-Gunn, 1998).

Therefore, one of the main purposes of UEY is to help determine the extent and nature of community influences on child development and how they might vary from family to family, school to school, classroom to classroom, and neighbourhood to neighbourhood. It includes three independent but complementary data collection components that allow for more detailed monitoring and reporting at the community level:

- The NLSCY Community Study;
- The Early Development Instrument; and
- The Community Mapping Study.

Together, this information will enhance our understanding of the community factors that affect early childhood development and the ways a community can best support the needs of young children and their parents.

Components of the Understanding the Early Years Initiative

The NLSCY Community Study: What we learn from parents.

An enhanced version of the NLSCY was developed to collect more detailed information from parents to help assess family use of community resources and the impact of these community resources on children's developmental outcomes. Randomly selected households, representative of all schools in Prince Albert, were chosen to participate in this voluntary survey. The information is being analyzed to determine the relative importance of community factors on child development as compared to the impact of individual and family factors.

The Early Development Instrument (EDI): What we learn from teachers.

The Early Development Instrument (formerly known as the School Readiness to Learn Instrument) is a questionnaire for kindergarten teachers. The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is designed to measure children's early development – before they start grade one – in these areas:

- Physical health and well-being;
- Emotional health and maturity;
- Social knowledge and competence;
- Language development and thinking skills; and
- Communication skills and general knowledge.

As an instrument designed to measure children's "readiness to learn", the EDI assesses how well children are prepared to participate in school activities. Developed by Dr. Magdalena Janus and Dr. Dan Offord at McMaster University's Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk, this instrument was designed and tested in collaboration with teachers, educators and several pilot projects.

> *The purpose of the EDI is to help communities assess how well they are doing in supporting child development. The Instrument is an age-appropriate measure that indicates how children in a classroom are developing. It cannot be used to assess an individual child's development.*

By profiling early childhood in a community, the EDI enables communities to simultaneously look backward and forward. For example, a community can look backward to adjust early childhood programs to better support early child development, and can look forward to adjust school programs so that they meet the current needs of incoming students.

The EDI in Prince Albert

In the initial year of the UEY Project in Prince Albert (2000 and 2001), the EDI was completed for 790 children who attended the 26 elementary schools in and around Prince Albert. Thirty-three percent of those children (264 children) scored in the lowest ten percent of children who participated in the EDI administered within the five national pilot UEY sites. Analysis of our EDI data showed that there was a larger than average number of children at risk in and around Prince Albert when compared to the data of the five pilot sites.

The Early Development Instrument will be administered again in 2002 and 2004. Thus, Prince Albert and its surrounding area will receive a reasonably comprehensive and accurate picture of the readiness of its young children for school. Furthermore, this ongoing collection of data will provide a sound basis for decision-making because it is

representative of the children in the whole community, rather than for a particular group of children (e.g. only children in Community Schools). Finally, EDI data will help our community to consider trends that emerge over a period of time and to begin evaluating intervention strategies.

Results of the Early Development Instrument and the NLSCY Community Study are available in Understanding the Early Years, Early Childhood in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

The Community Mapping Study of Prince Albert: What we learn from community mapping.

The purpose of this report is to focus on the results of the Community Mapping Study conducted in Prince Albert in the summer and fall of 2000. This study gathered information about:

- The physical and socio-economic characteristics of the neighbourhoods in which children live;
- The kinds of programs and services that were available to children aged six and younger and their parents; and
- Where these programs were located.

Four principal data sources were used: The 1996 Census, a survey of neighbourhoods using the Neighbourhood Observation Instrument, a survey of current programs and services for children and their families, and physical and socio-economic data derived from local sources. Putting together the information collected by the Community Mapping Study will help Prince Albert gain a greater understanding of whether resources are in close proximity to where children live and whether there is equitable distribution of key resources.

Defining the Community in Which Children Live

The concepts of neighbourhood and community incorporate aspects of psychology and sociology together with geography, and may be defined by the social interactions and functions that occur in a particular place in addition to its actual location. Although there are numerous ways of defining neighbourhoods and communities, for the purposes of this report, neighbourhoods will be defined and referred to using the geographical boundaries of Enumeration Areas (EAs). An EA (in this report, a neighbourhood) is the smallest standard geographic area for which census data are reported. The terms "community" and "city" will apply to Prince Albert and the rural areas surrounding the city.

Map 1: EAs in Prince Albert

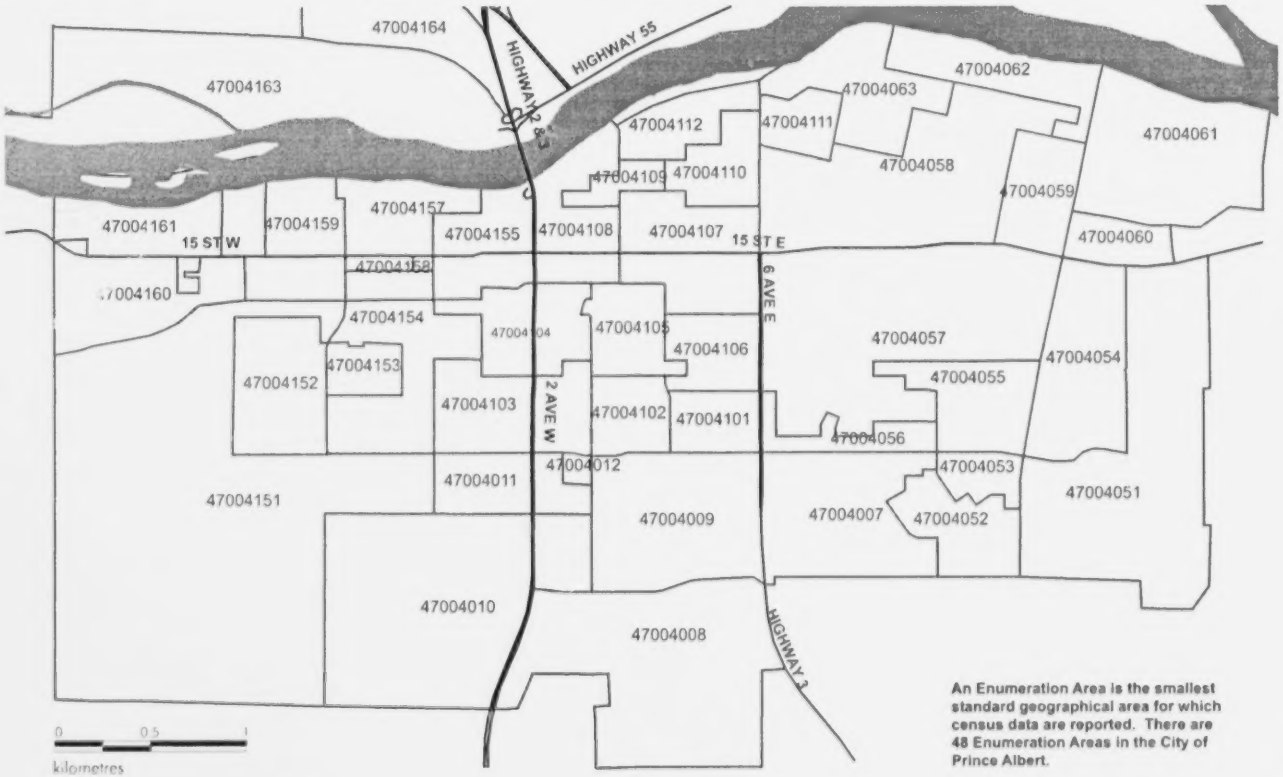
There are 48 Enumeration Areas in the City of Prince Albert and 98 Enumeration Areas in the rural study area. **Map 1a** (Urban) and **Map 1b** (Rural) show the EAs in and around Prince Albert. In the City of Prince Albert, the population data is discussed in terms of city neighbourhoods. **Map 1c** (Urban) illustrates where the urban neighbourhoods are located.

UEY Results: Putting It All Together

When the results of the NLSCY-Community Study, the Early Development Instrument, and the Community Mapping Study are analyzed, the information will help communities to:

- Measure children's early development before they enter school;
- Show how community influences impact child development in the early years;

Map 1a (Urban): The Enumeration Areas in the City of Prince Albert



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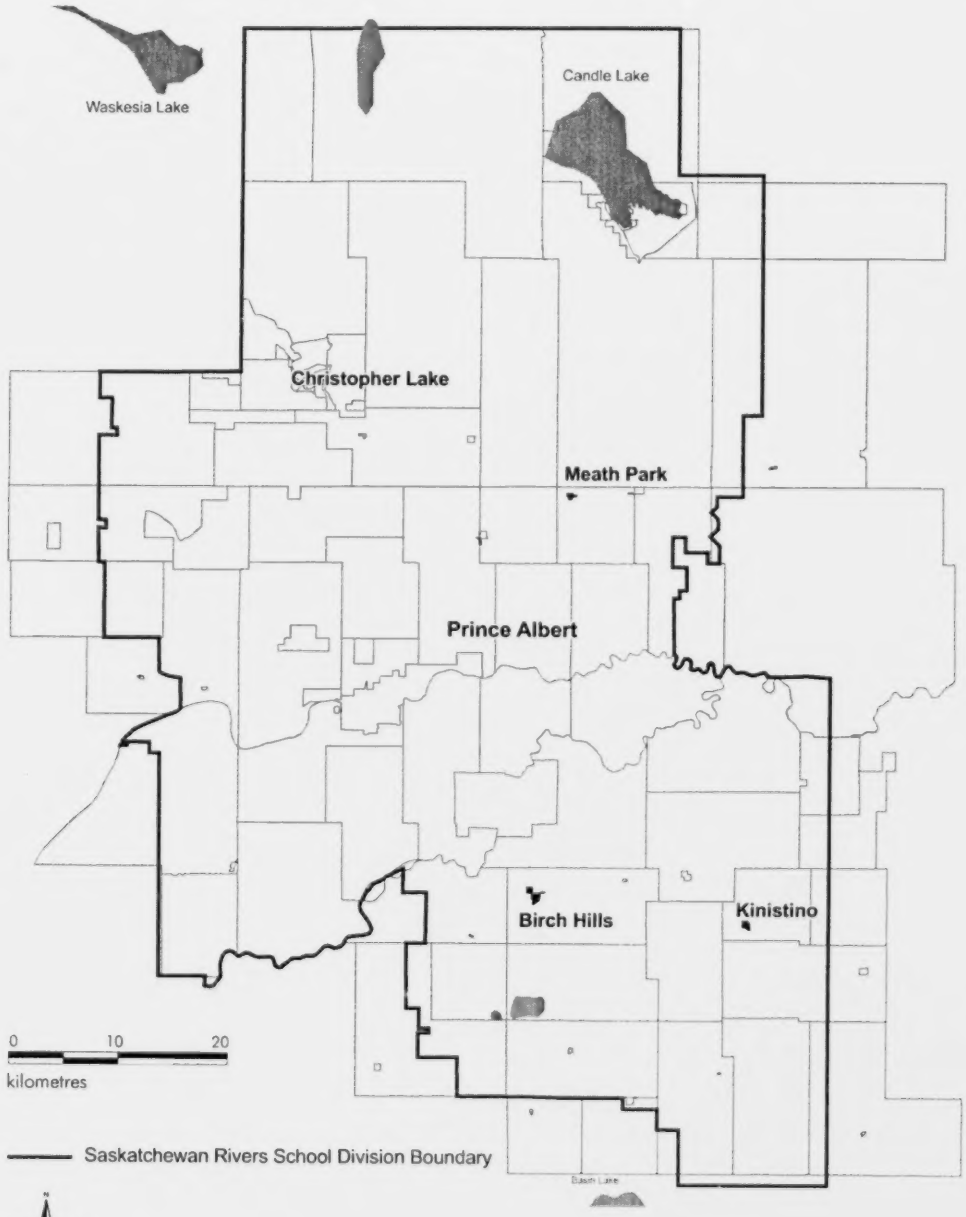
Map 1b (Rural): The Enumeration Areas in rural portions of the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division



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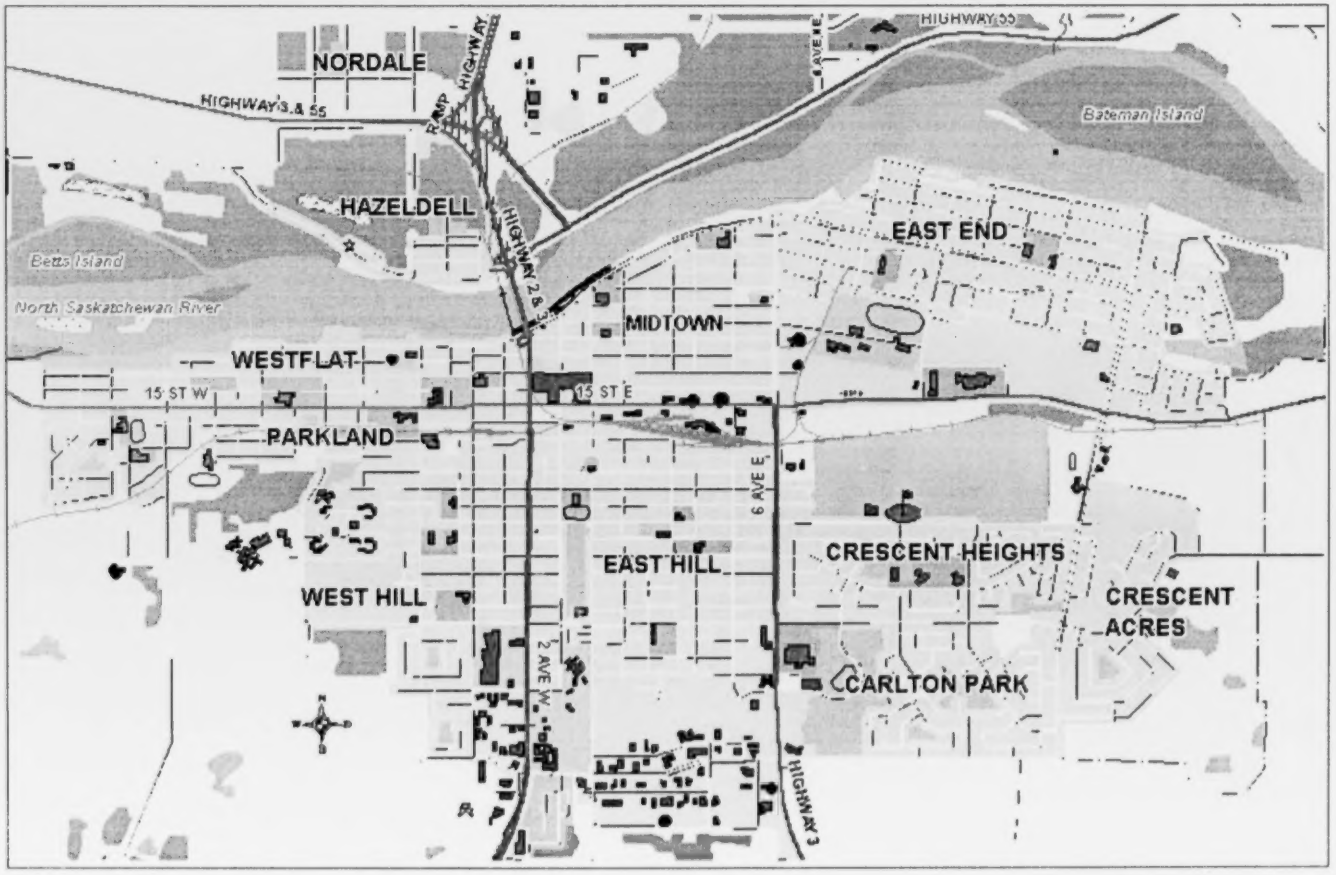
Map 1c (Urban): Prince Albert's Neighbourhoods



- Profile the type and availability of community resources for families and children;
- Assess how well the needs of local families with young children are being met; and
- Learn more about how research can be used at the local level to bring about improvements for children.

Putting together the information collected by UEY provides a framework for analysis that will not only suggest the effectiveness of services, but will also give some indication as to why services and neighbourhood resources work the way they do. This analysis will also provide the basis for community-wide discussions on how to optimize child development outcomes by developing evidence-based strategies to effectively allocate resources.

2. The Prince Albert Community

Many competing theories exist in the literature to explain how and why communities have an influence on children's development. Some focus on the physical environment in which children grow, others on the social environment and the interactions among the community's residents, while still others examine the role of community programs and services. This report examines the social, physical and resource environment of Prince Albert with respect to early childhood development (Connor, Norris & McLean, 2000).

The City of Prince Albert is a small urban area of 64.98 square kilometres located in north central Saskatchewan. As illustrated by **Table 1**, Prince Albert has a modest but steady population growth rate.

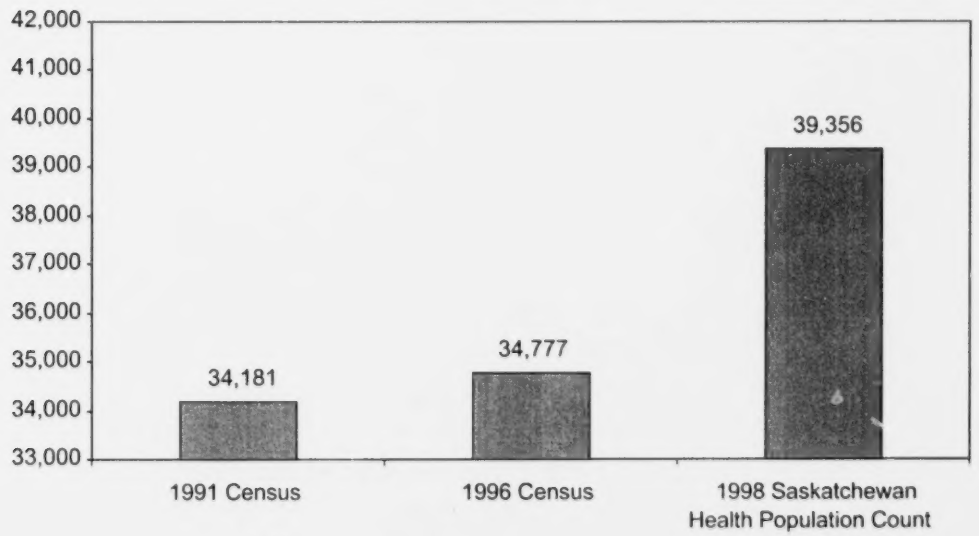
A report by Stabler and Olfert (1998) provides a description of the economic and demographic characteristics of Prince Albert and the surrounding area:

> "Prince Albert, the province's third largest city, plays an important role in the economy of north central Saskatchewan, providing wholesale and retail trade, private and public services, as well as substantial employment to residents of the surrounding area. Prince Albert provides a strong base upon which to build. A sizeable portion of the region's labour force is in the prime age group and incomes compare favourably with the provincial averages. Attention must be directed to ensuring that employment opportunities for the relatively large native population become increasingly available."

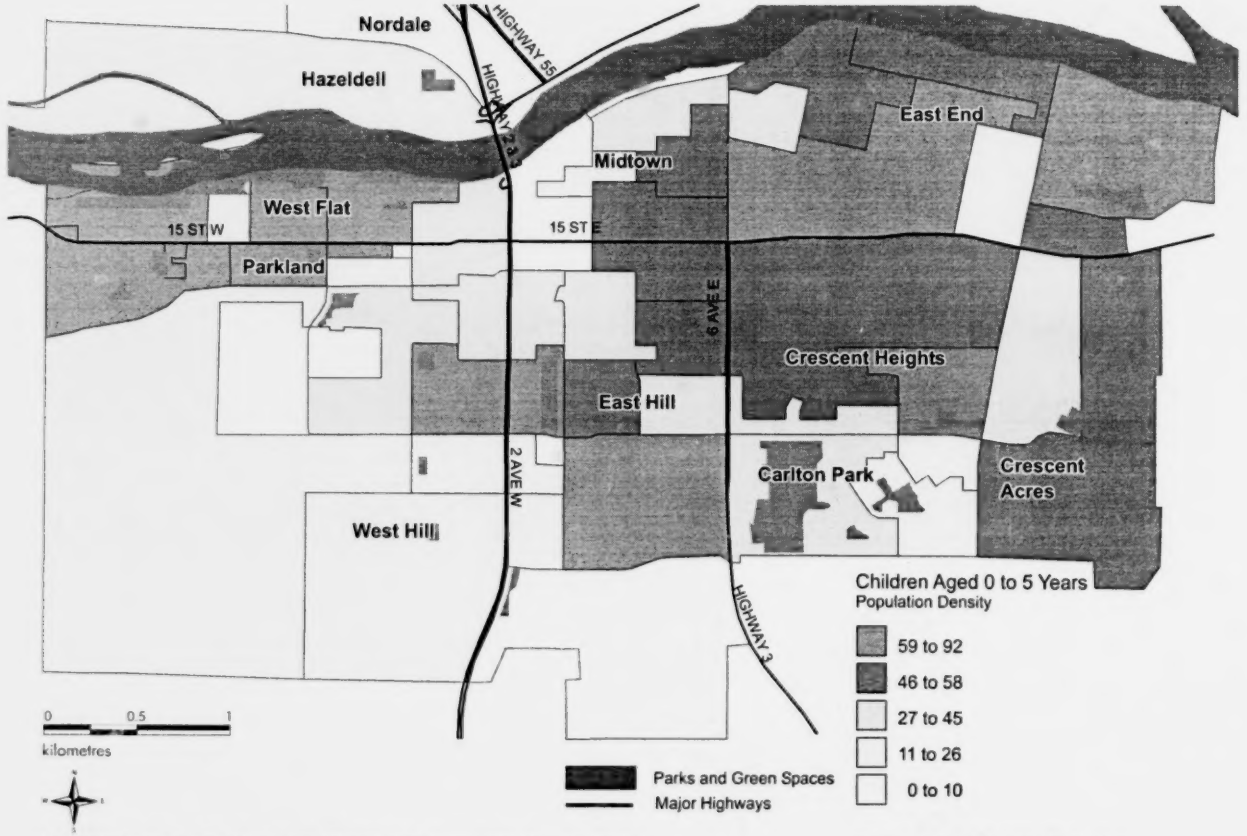
Map 2: Where did the children aged 0 to 5 years live?

This map illustrates the population density of children aged 5 years and younger by

Table 1 **The Population of Prince Albert**



Map 2 (Urban): Where did children aged 0 to 5 years live?



Enumeration Area. Whereas most population data in this report are from the 1996 Census, the data displayed in **Map 2** are current to November 2000 and have been provided by the Prince Albert Health District.

- Young children are distributed across Prince Albert.

- Parks and green spaces are also distributed throughout the city. The larger green spaces in the southeast area contain a golf course and a large soccer, football and track facility.

Data for rural areas were not available.

Map 3: How was land used in Prince Albert?

Land in Prince Albert is mainly used for residential purposes. Parks and maintained green spaces are prevalent throughout the city. **Map 3** also indicates large areas of open and undeveloped spaces.

A large area north of the North Saskatchewan River is also part of the City of Prince Albert. This area contains some industrial areas, the Weyehaeuser pulp and paper mill, a small residential area, and a forest. Because there were few children living in this area, it was not shown in this report's maps. Eliminating this northern area also provides a more readable picture within the one-page maps.

A similar land use map for areas outside the City of Prince Albert was not available.

Map 4a and b: How was the total population distributed?

Map 4a shows that population density was the highest in the West Flat, East End, Crescent Heights, Carlton Park and Crescent Acres neighbourhoods. **Map 4b** illustrates the sparse population of rural portions of the study area.

The 1996 Census indicated there were 6,285 families with children in the City of Prince Albert and 2,870 families with children living in the towns, villages and rural areas surrounding Prince Albert.

The family structure varied across the study area. **Table 2** shows the percentage of families in four family types: married couples with children; common law couples with children; lone male parents and lone female parents.

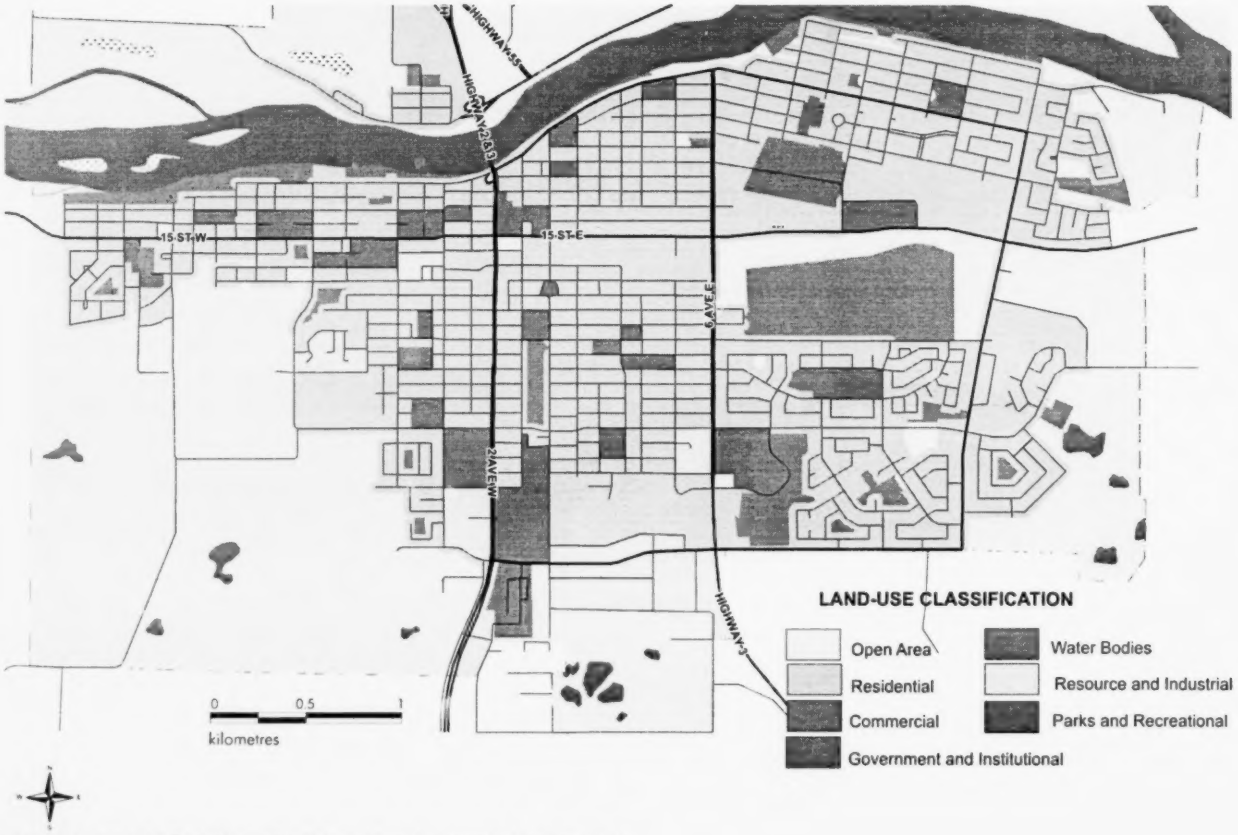
- Almost one-quarter of families with children were headed by a lone parent.

Table 3 compares family structures in the City of Prince Albert with the surrounding rural area.

- The percentage of families headed by a lone parent was significantly lower in rural areas.

More analysis about family structure in Prince Albert is offered in Chapter 3.

Map 3: How was the land used in the City of Prince Albert?



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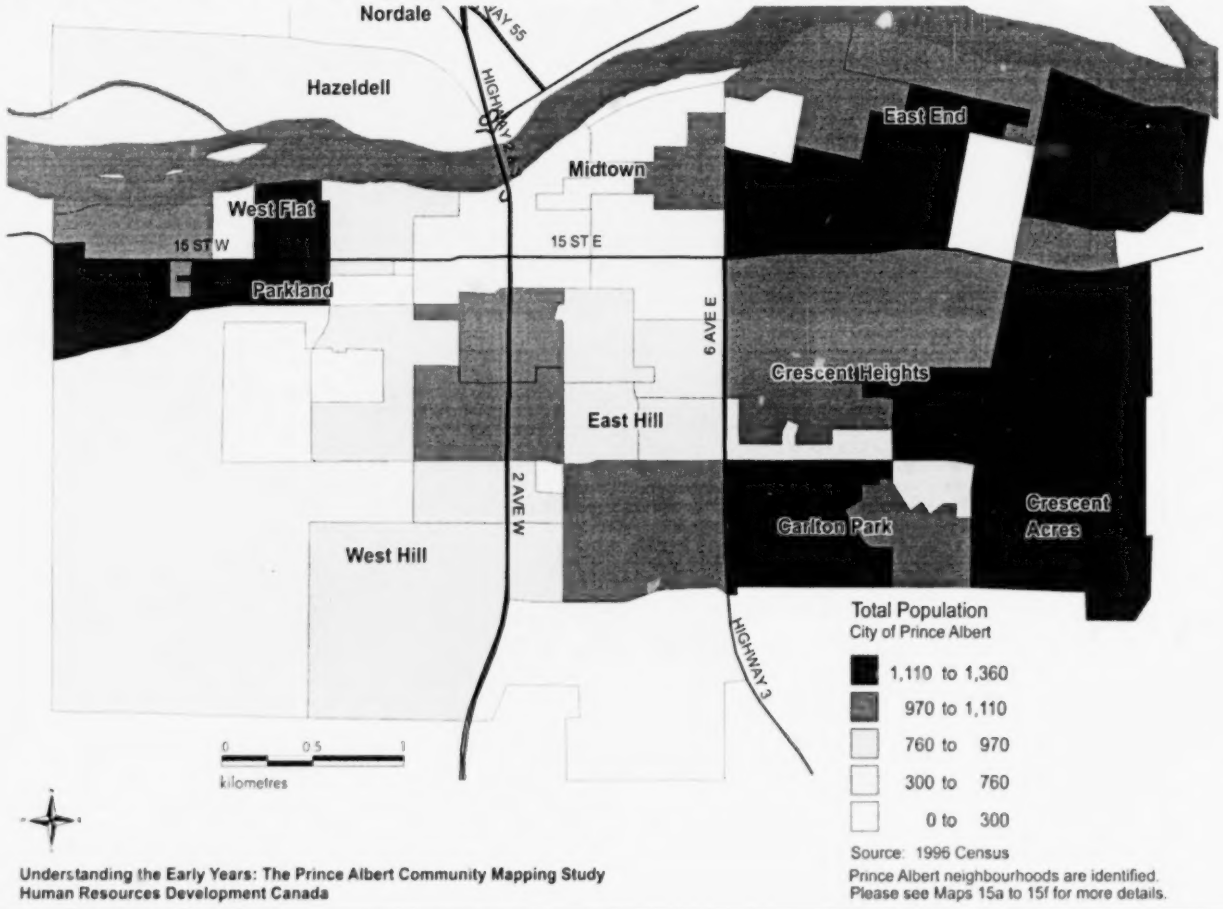
Map 4a (Urban): How was the total population distributed?



Map 4b (Rural): How was the total population distributed?

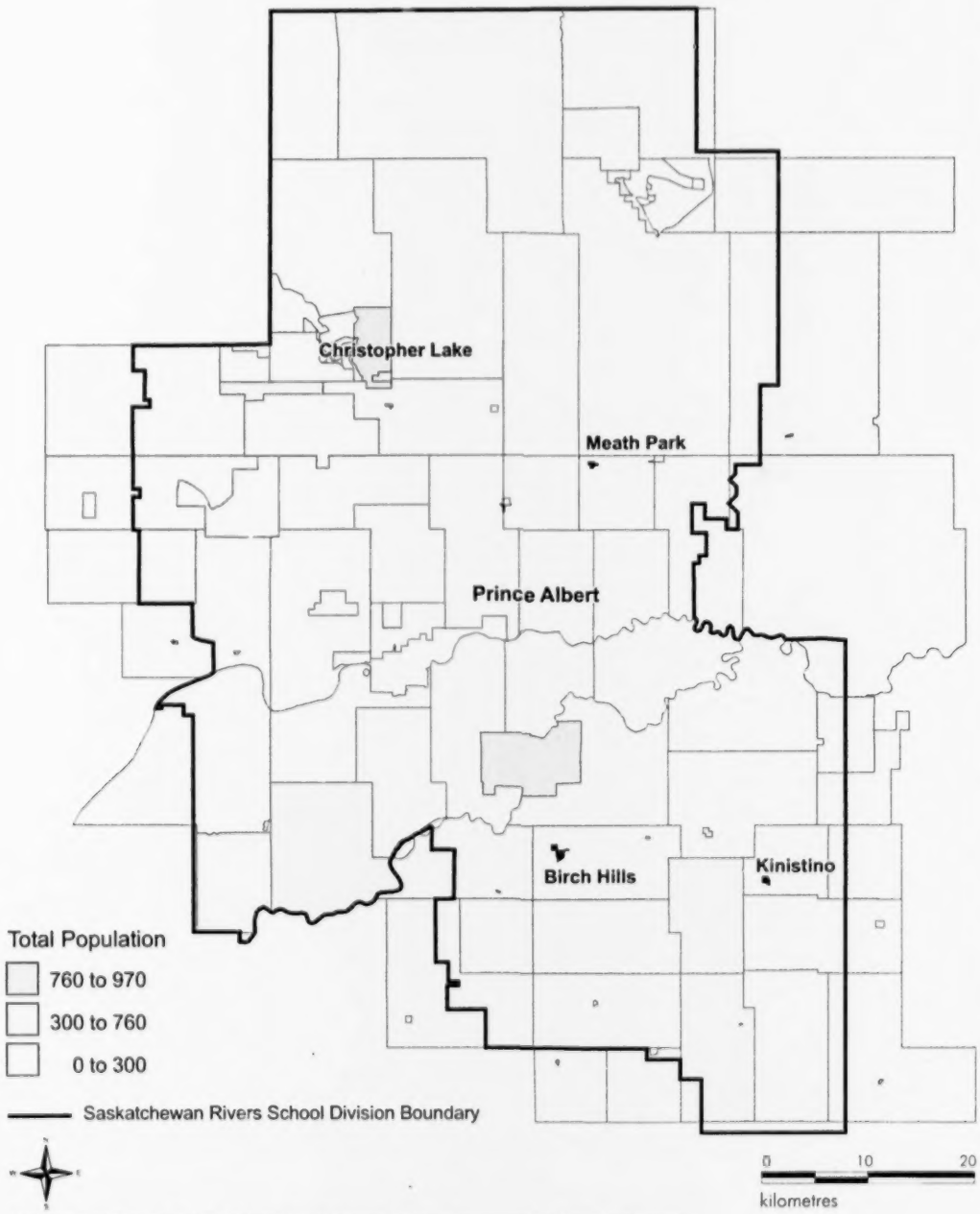


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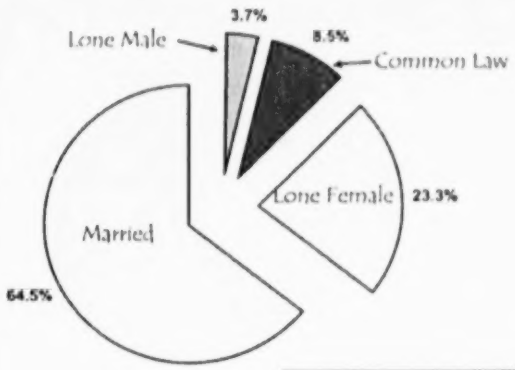
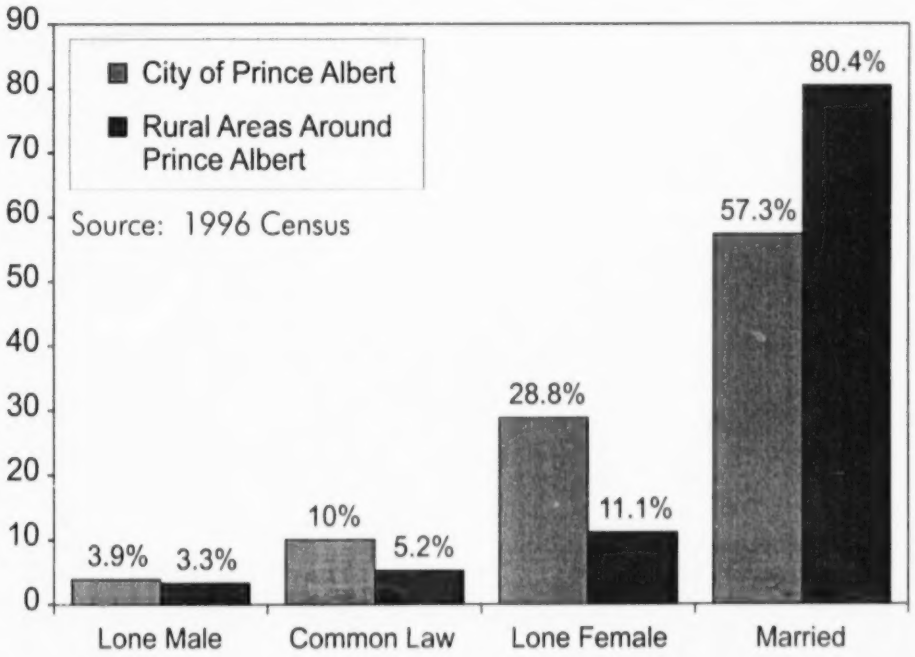
Table 2 Family Structure in Prince Albert and Area



Family Structure Types	Numbers of Families in Prince Albert	Number of Families in Rural Areas	Total	Percent of Total
Lone Male	245	95	340	3.7
Common Law	630	150	780	8.5
Lone Female	1810	320	2130	23.3
Married	3600	2305	5905	64.5
Total	**6285**	**2870**	**9155**	**100.0**

Source: 1996 Census

Table 3 Family Structure: Urban/Rural Comparison



3. The Social Environment in Prince Albert

A child's social interaction with other people can have an important influence on his or her development. The messages they receive about who they are, their value and their role in the neighbourhood help to shape their identity. Children's capacity for successful, positive social interaction begins at a young age. They are influenced by early close relationships, their experiences with other children and the guidance and direct instruction that comes from parents and other family members (Doherty, 1997). These relationships can be complemented by interactions with other people beyond the family such as caregivers, residents of their neighbourhood and the larger community. Some theorists suggest that positive peer and adult role models in the community can influence child development and well-being, particularly in terms of behaviour and learning, while negative environments may deprive children of positive social social supports, exposing them to unhealthy or otherwise anti-social behaviours.

This section provides socio-economic and demographic information about the neighbourhoods where children in Prince Albert lived using data from the 1996 Census. A number of characteristics of the residents, such as family status, education, employment and income, and multiculturalism were examined. This analysis helps researchers answer a number of critical questions related to the social environment of children living in Price Albert's various neighbourhoods.

Population Mobility

How many of Prince Albert's neighbourhoods were stable or transient and how many children and families resided in such neighbourhoods?

Why ask this question?

Neighbourhoods with higher levels of stability are those in which community members are more likely to act on behalf of the common good of children. One way to measure neighbourhood stability is by measuring the proportion of individuals who made a residential move in the last year. High rates of residential mobility and transiency in neighbourhoods often correspond to social disruption and weakened social ties, which in turn can create a climate more conducive to crime and other types of anti-social behaviour. Conversely, high rates of neighbourhood stability promote the development of social ties, a prerequisite to neighbourhood cohesion and collective efficacy. The terms "neighbourhood cohesion" and "collective efficacy" were defined by Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls (1997) as "social cohesion among neighbours combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good". In other words, in neighbourhoods where residents are isolated or estranged from each other, social ties tend to be weak and a sense of common interest is even weaker. On the other hand, stability within a community not only enables those living within neighbourhoods to draw strength and support from one another, but it also enables them to take action as a community.

Population mobility creates pressure for the family and the neighbourhood. Family relocation creates stress for family members, and this stress is compounded with frequent moves. For example, with each move families have to find their place in the new community and find out about the services and recreational opportunities available to them.

Some theorists suggest that positive peer and adult role models in the community can influence child development and well-being, particularly in terms of behaviour and learning, while negative environments may deprive children of positive social supports, while exposing them to unhealthy or otherwise anti-social behaviours.

Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Jencks & Mayer, 1990.

Map 5a and b: Which areas had the highest mobility?

- Several Enumeration Areas had a very high number of people who moved within the last year. These areas were in both the most affluent neighbourhoods and the neighbourhoods with the greatest socio-economic challenges.
- Rural area data indicated a population less likely to be mobile.

In general, Prince Albert could be characterized as a community with a large degree of mobility both within its community and to and from its community. New housing development likely accounted for a large number of the moves within the East End, Crescent Acres and West Hill neighbourhoods of the city. Movement within the Midtown, West Flat, Parkland and East Hill areas were likely related to the high number of rental properties and community housing units available in those neighbourhoods (*Refer to* **Map 14**). It is noteworthy that Prince Albert had the highest proportion of rental properties in Saskatchewan.

Since the 1996 census data does not reveal why a population is mobile, communities need to look for reasons why there is high mobility in certain areas. Perhaps a concomitant look at **Map 9c** (examining areas where the average family income is below the national average) would illuminate this discussion. In many of the areas with high mobility rates, there are also many households where average family incomes were below the national average.

While annual mobility rates enable decision-makers to discern the shift in population in a community, mobility rates over a five-year period (to be measured by the UEY Project) will help to reveal patterns of population movement.

Education and Employment

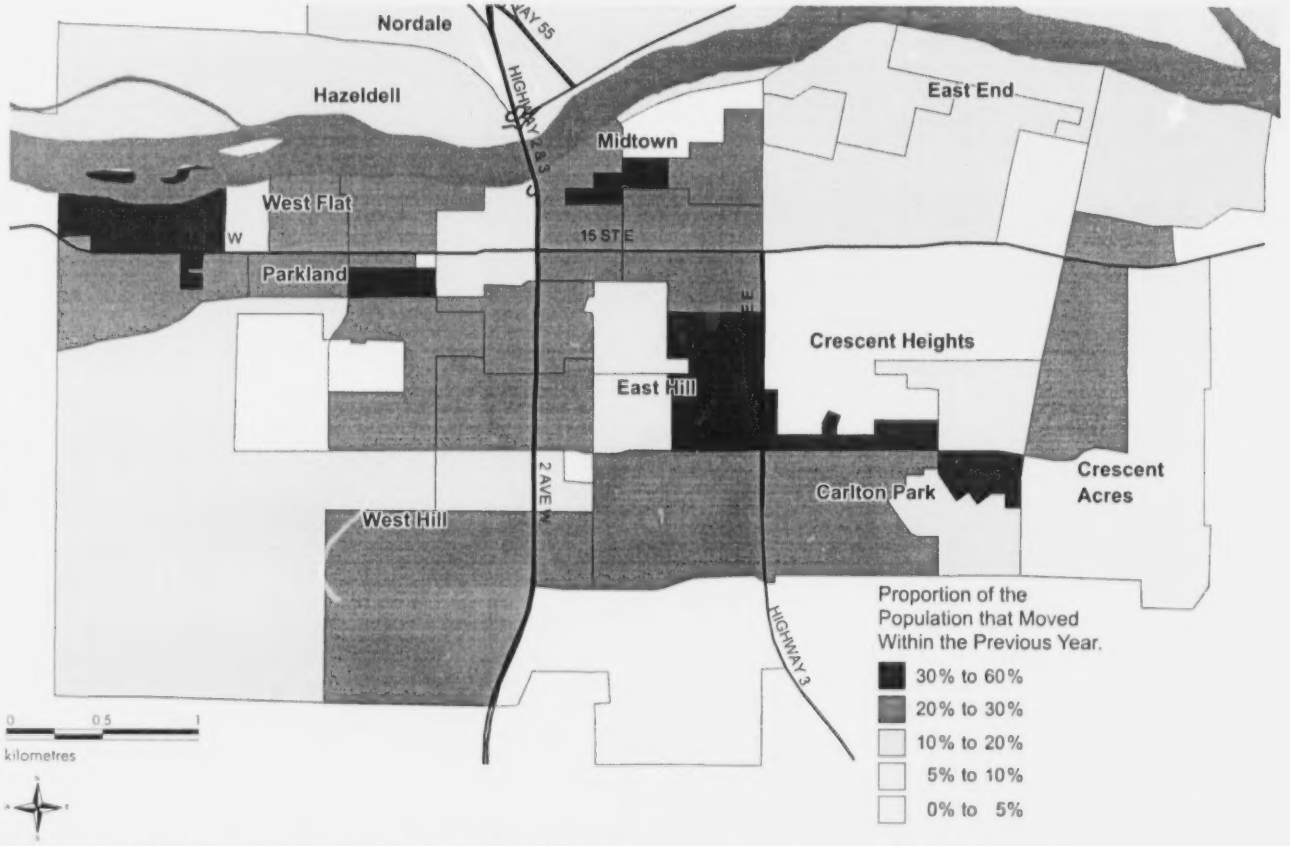
How educated were people in the community and how many residents were employed?

Why ask this question?

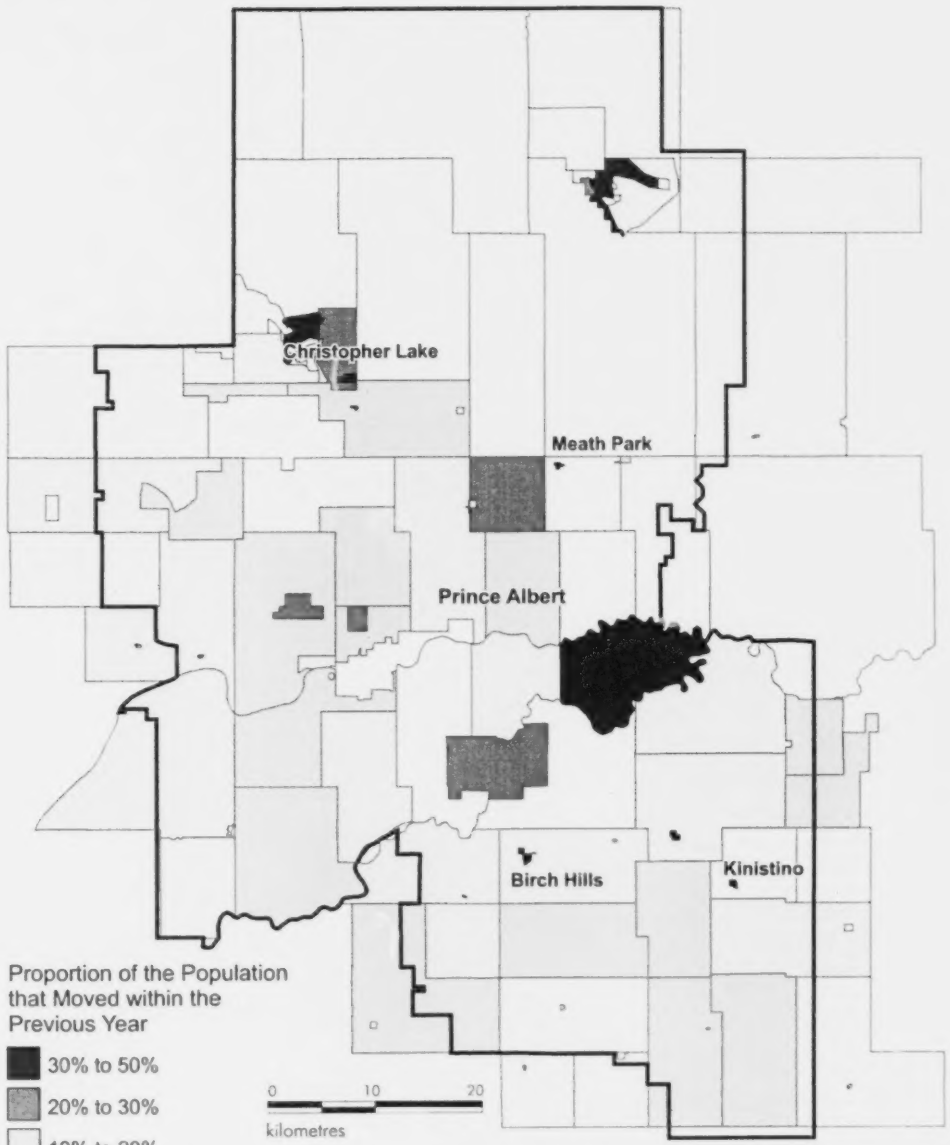
Education levels of residents are considered a crucial part of the socio-economic environment of communities where children grow and develop. Adults in the community with high levels of education are more likely to be employed, less likely to live in poverty and more likely to serve as positive role models and mentors to their own children and children in the community. Conversely, those with lower education levels may face diminished employment prospects, and are more likely to live in poverty.

Problems in neighbourhoods with high unemployment rates may be compounded by higher poverty and lack of available resources. These neighbourhood characteristics can negatively impact a child's environment and overall well-being. For example, research has shown that neighbourhoods with high levels of unemployment can impact negatively on children's behaviour (Kohen, Hertzman, Brooks-Gunn, 1998). It should be no surprise, then, that the educational level of parents has been shown to be related to the developmental outcomes of their children.

Map 5a (Urban): Which areas had the highest mobility?



Map 5b (Rural): Which areas had the highest mobility?



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Several other studies have found relationships between the general socio-economic climate of neighbourhoods (of which levels of education and employment are important components) and the development of the children who live in them. Such studies have shown that neighbourhoods with residents of higher average socio-economic status were associated with more positive developmental outcomes (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealand, 1993; Chase Lansdale, Gordon, Brooks-Gunn & Klebanov, 1997; Halpern-Felsher et al, 1997).

Education data for Prince Albert and a large area outside of the city was compiled by Stabler and Olfert.

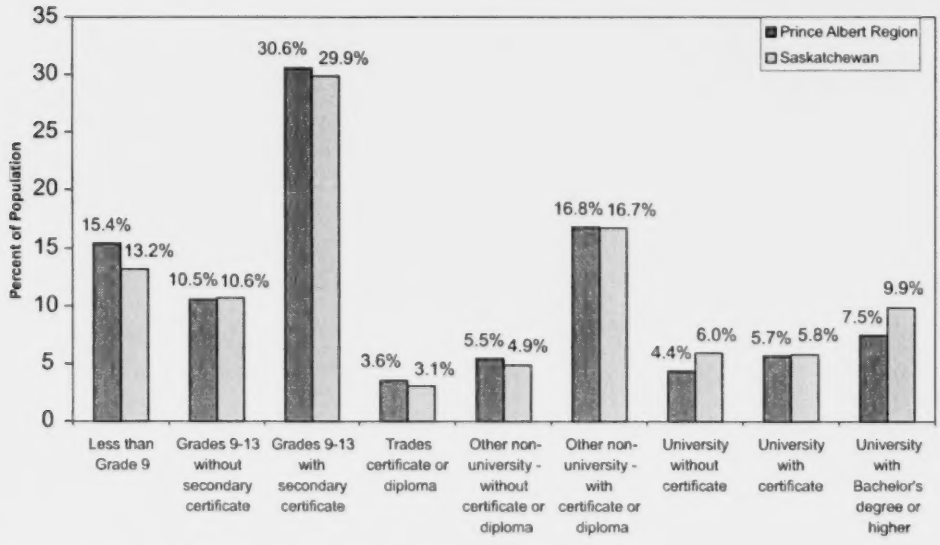
Table 4 compares levels of education in the Prince Albert area with the Province of Saskatchewan as a whole. A quick glace at these data show that 44% of the adult population in the Prince Albert area had some form of post-secondary education, slightly below the provincial level of 46%.

The data also show that 26% of the adult population *had not* achieved a high school diploma. Although above the provincial average of 24%, high school dropout rates in Prince Albert area were significantly lower than the national average of 37%.

Map 6a and b: Which areas had the highest proportion of people with a post-secondary education?

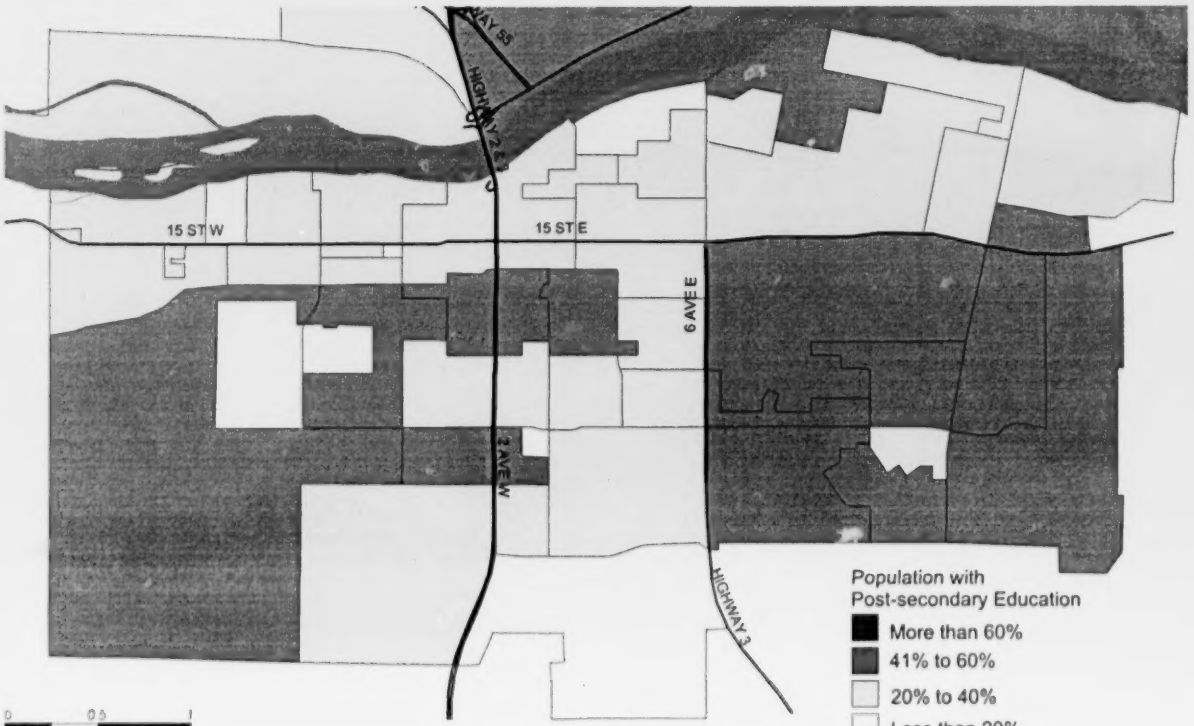
- In Prince Albert, the areas with the highest family income typically had the highest number of people with post-secondary education (*please see* ***Map 9a***). This was particularly evident in the Crescent Heights, Carlton Park, Crescent Acres and West Hill neighbourhoods.

Table 4 – Education Levels: A comparison of the Prince Albert Region with Saskatchewan



Source: Stabler and Olfert (1998) and 1996 Census Data

Map 6a (Urban): Which areas had the highest proportion of people with a post-secondary education?



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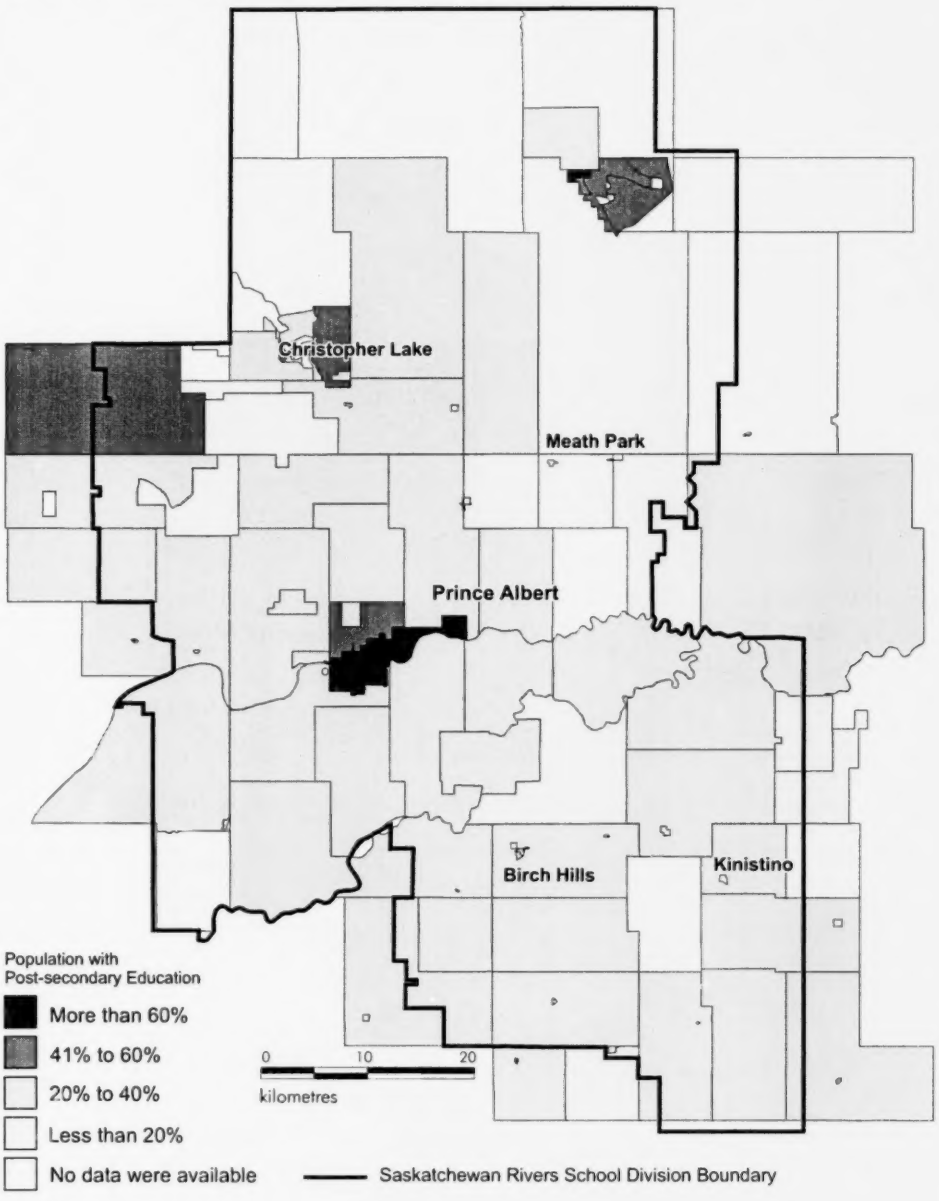
Map 6b (Rural): Which areas had the highest proportion of people with a post-secondary education?



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- The Stabler Report commented favourably on the labour force in the Prince Albert region. The data from both the City of Prince Albert and rural areas showed a large percentage of the population with some type of post-secondary education. Although about 30% have less than Grade 12 certification.
- Rural areas of the study area showed a more homogeneous level of post-secondary education.

Map 7a and b: Which areas had the highest proportion of people without a high school diploma?

- The proportion of people without a high school diploma in Prince Albert and area was 26%, much better than the national average of 37%.
- **Map 7a** illustrates that the Prince Albert neighbourhoods of West Flat and Parkland had a proportion of people without a high school diploma above the provincial and national averages.
- **Map 2** shows that this area of the city (West Flat and Parkland neighbourhoods) also contained a high number of children aged 0 to 5 years. As mentioned earlier, *the education of parents has been shown to be related to the development of their children, and neighbourhoods with residents of higher average socio-economic status are associated with more positive developmental outcomes.*

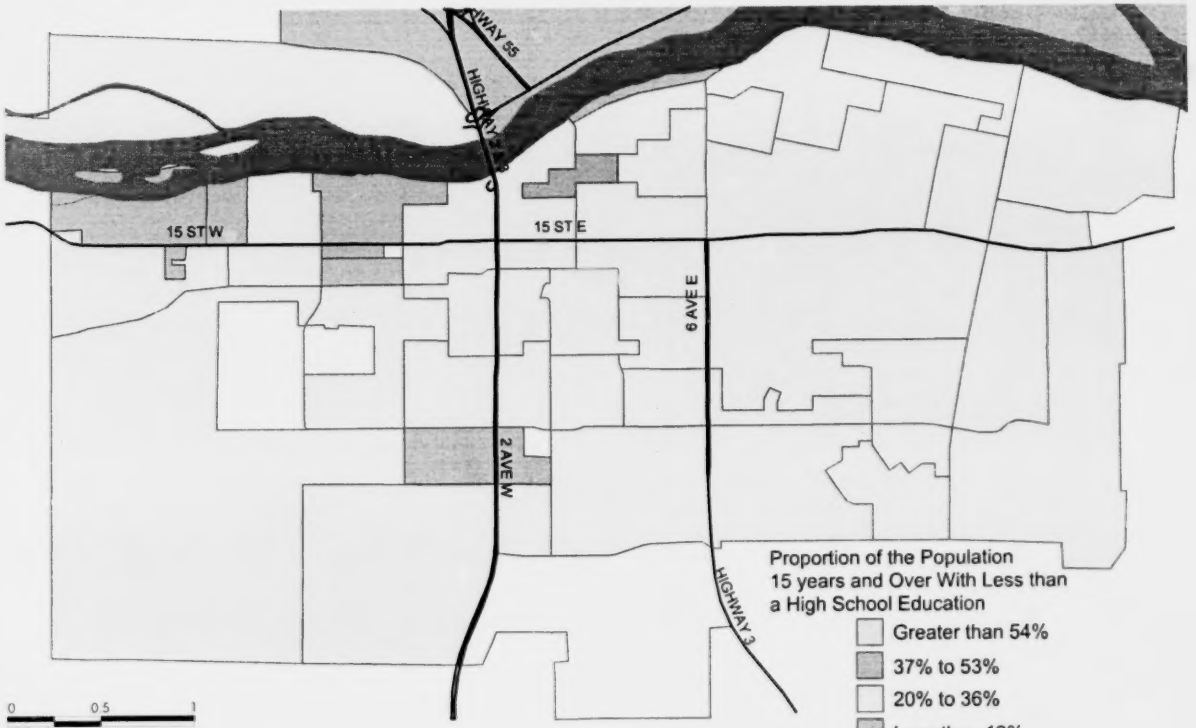
Employment data for Prince Albert paints a contrasting picture. On the one hand, Stabler and Olfert (1998) noted a 7.5% increase in the labour force for the Prince Albert region for the period 1991 to 1996. They concluded that this "represents a significant increase especially in light of the small absolute decline in the labour force at the provincial level". On the other hand, Stabler and Olfert reported "the number of fully employable SWIN (social assistance) clients (2,125 people) represents a relatively high 4.7% of the region's potential labour force (aged 15 to 64 years old). In addition, the 1, 541 EI (Employment Insurance) recipients represents 3.4 % of the region's potential labour force." Therefore, it would appear that the Prince Albert area has a growing labour market, while at the same time, has a high number of people who are employable but not part of the labour force.

Map 8: What were the unemployment rates of the neighbourhoods?

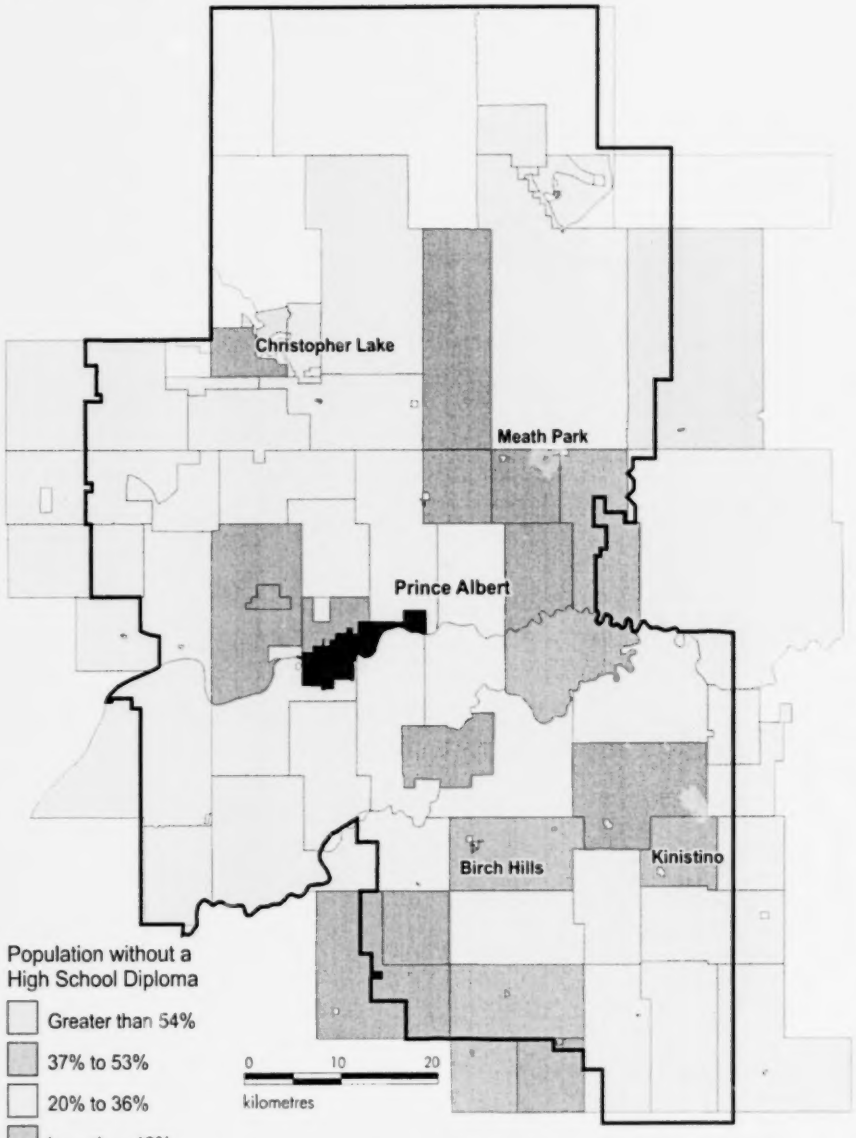
- In the City of Prince Albert, unemployment data were not available for a number of Enumeration Areas. However, the data did indicate significant unemployment rates for the West Flat, Parkland and Midtown neighbourhoods.
- In rural areas there were a significant number of Enumeration Areas without employment data. Therefore, a rural map was not prepared.

Examination of **Map 8** suggests that there were several areas within Prince Albert where almost every second person in the Enumeration Area was unemployed. There were a number of high need areas where these data were suppressed, so the need is likely even greater than the map suggests. Although there was an increasing number of employment opportunities available in Prince Albert and area, there remained a large number of adults who could not or did not avail themselves of these opportunities.

Map 7a (Urban): Which areas had the highest proportion of people without a high school diploma?



Map 7b (Rural): Which areas had the highest proportion of people without a high school diploma?



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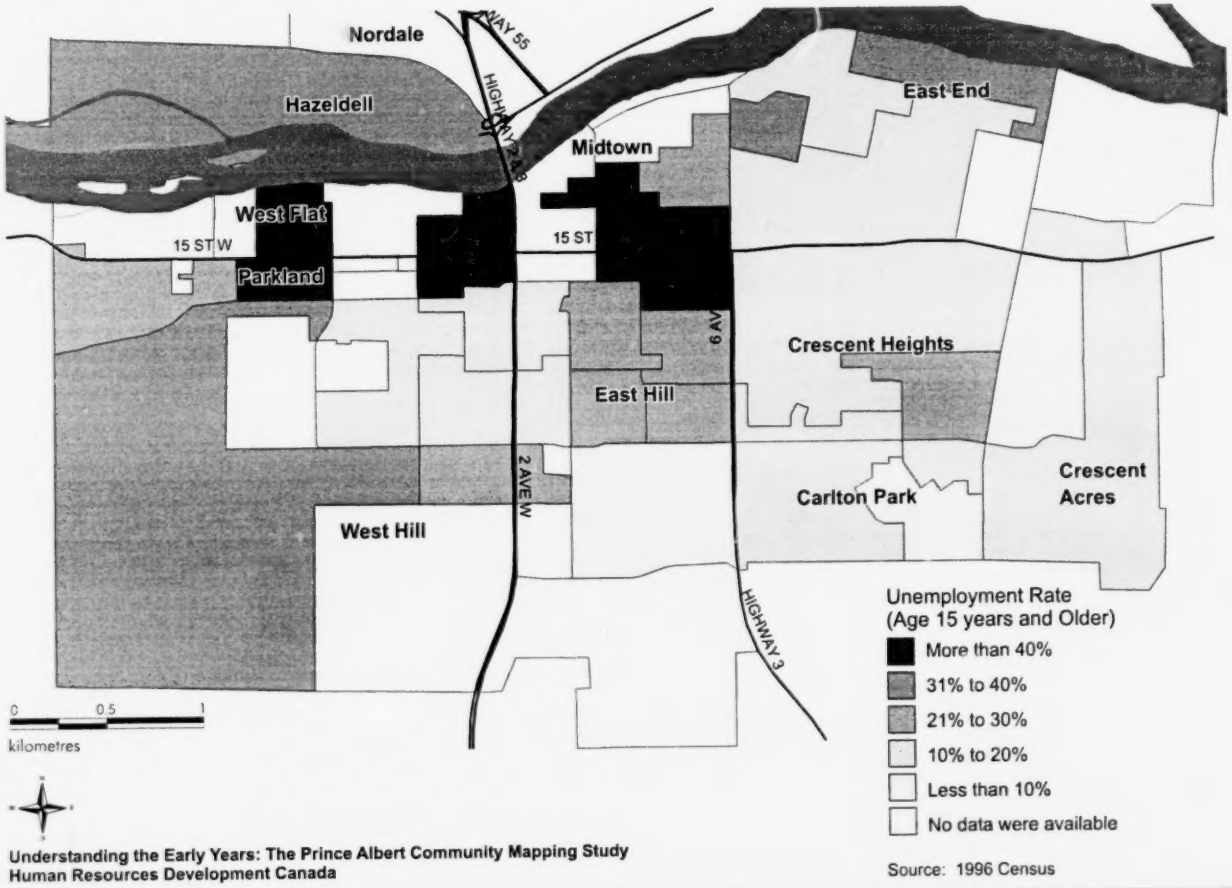
Map 8 (Urban): What were the unemployment rates of the neighbourhoods?



Household Incomes

What were the income levels of Prince Albert residents?

Why ask this question?

Adequate household income is essential to purchase goods and services, to access resources (through transportation, for example) and to benefit from cultural resources such as books and theatres. Neighbourhoods where a high number of residents live in poverty can pose challenges to families and children, service providers and policy makers. Such areas may lack resources, and residents can be deprived of interaction with mainstream social networks and role models through the process of isolation and segregation. These neighbourhoods may also experience overcrowding, lower levels of safety, a less desirable physical environment, and a scarcity of resources.

Map 9a (Urban) and 9b (Rural): What was the average family income?

Map 9c (Urban): What areas were above and below the national average family income?

- The average family income in Prince Albert was $46,309, which was slightly above the national average of $45,739. Of the 48 Enumeration Areas in the City of Prince Albert:
- Forty-six percent (22 EAs) were below the national average family income;
- Thirty-five percent (17 EAs) were above the national average; and
- Data were not available for 19% of the Enumeration Areas.
- **Map 9c** indicates the Enumeration Areas that were either above or below the national average of family income. The neighbourhoods of West Flat, Parkland, Midtown, East End and East Hill had a significant number of families whose income was below the national average. When one juxtaposes the data from **Map 2**, these neighbourhoods also had a high density of children aged 0 to 5 years.
- Since data were not available for so many of the Enumeration Areas in rural sections of the school division, conclusions about income in rural areas are not possible.

Family Structure

What was the family structure of the neighbourhoods?

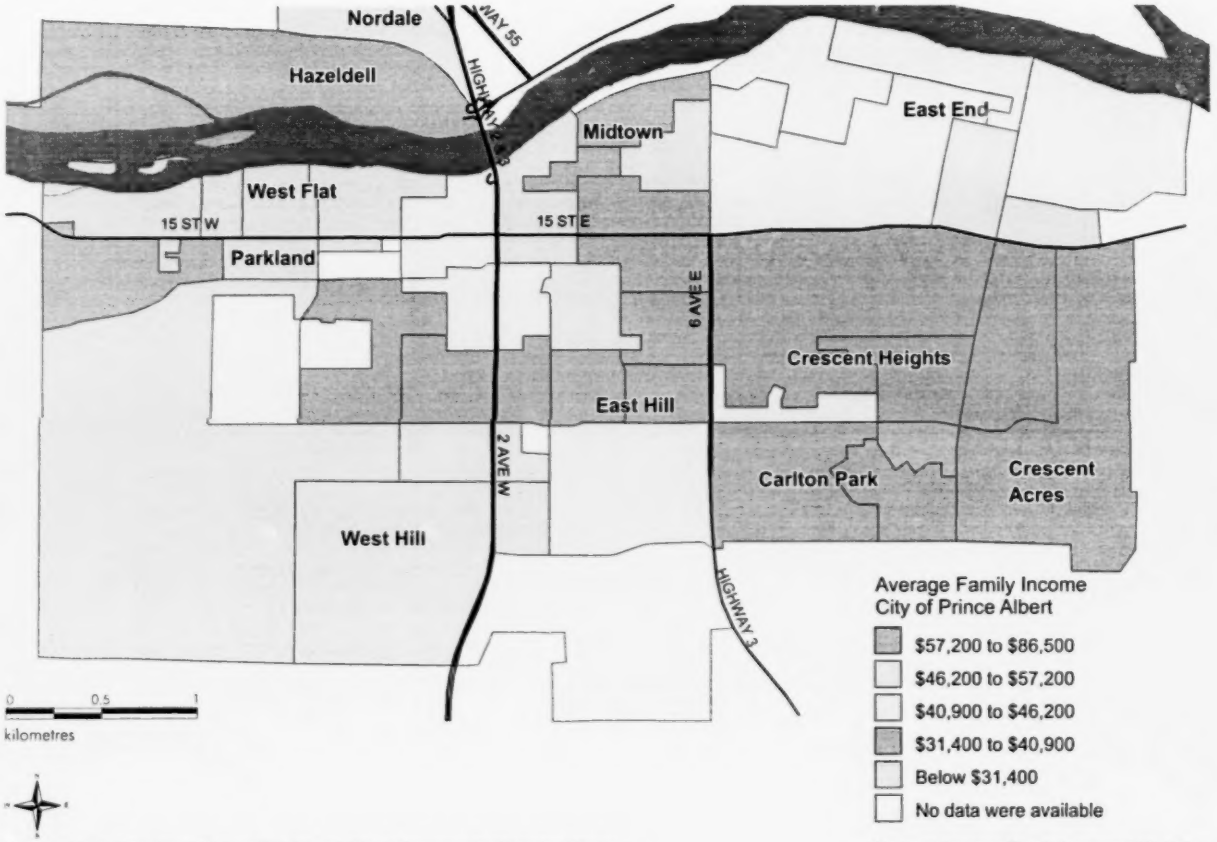
Why ask this question?

While most children from lone parent households do well, research has shown that a higher proportion of children with cognitive and behavioural problems come from such families (Lipman, Boyle, Dooley, & Offord, 1998; Ross, Roberts, & Scott, 1998). In addition, a high incidence of two-parent families living in a neighbourhood has been linked to healthier child and adolescent development (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealand, 1993).

Map 10a and b: Which areas had the highest number of families headed by a lone parent?

- Lone parent families were in much larger numbers in neighbourhoods that were experiencing the greatest socio-economic challenges – the West Flat, Parkland, Midtown, East End and East Hill neighbourhoods. This information correlates with **Map 9**, which shows what neighbourhoods were either above or below the national average family income.

Map 9a (Urban): What was the average family income?



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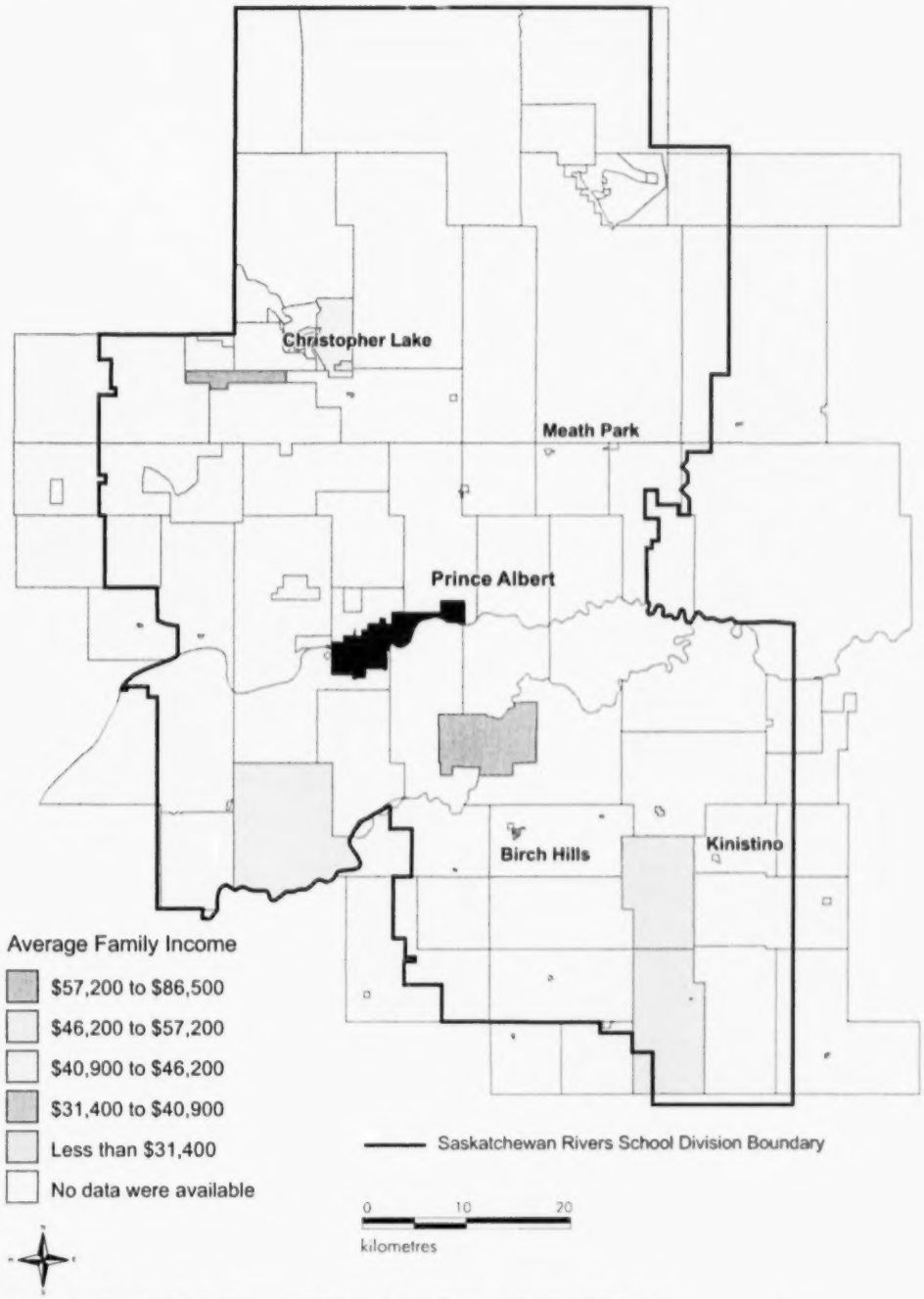
National Average Family Income: $45, 739
Source: 1996 Census

Map 9b (Rural): What was the average family income?



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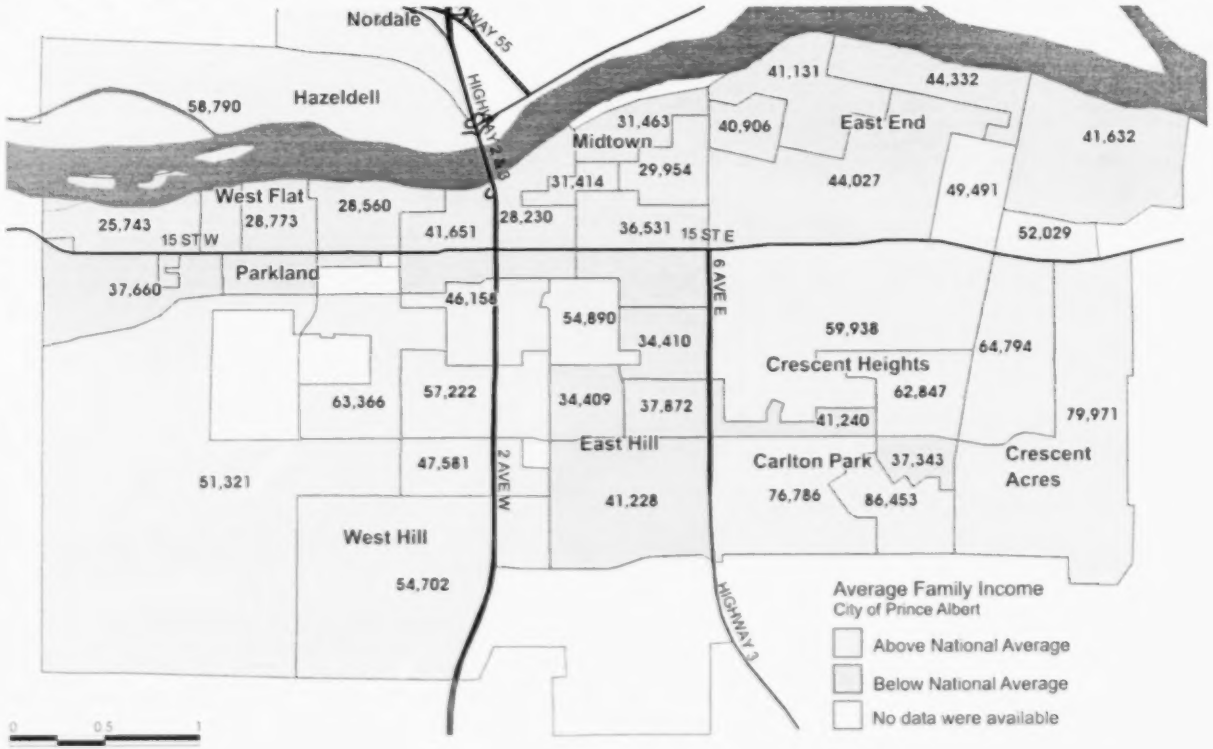
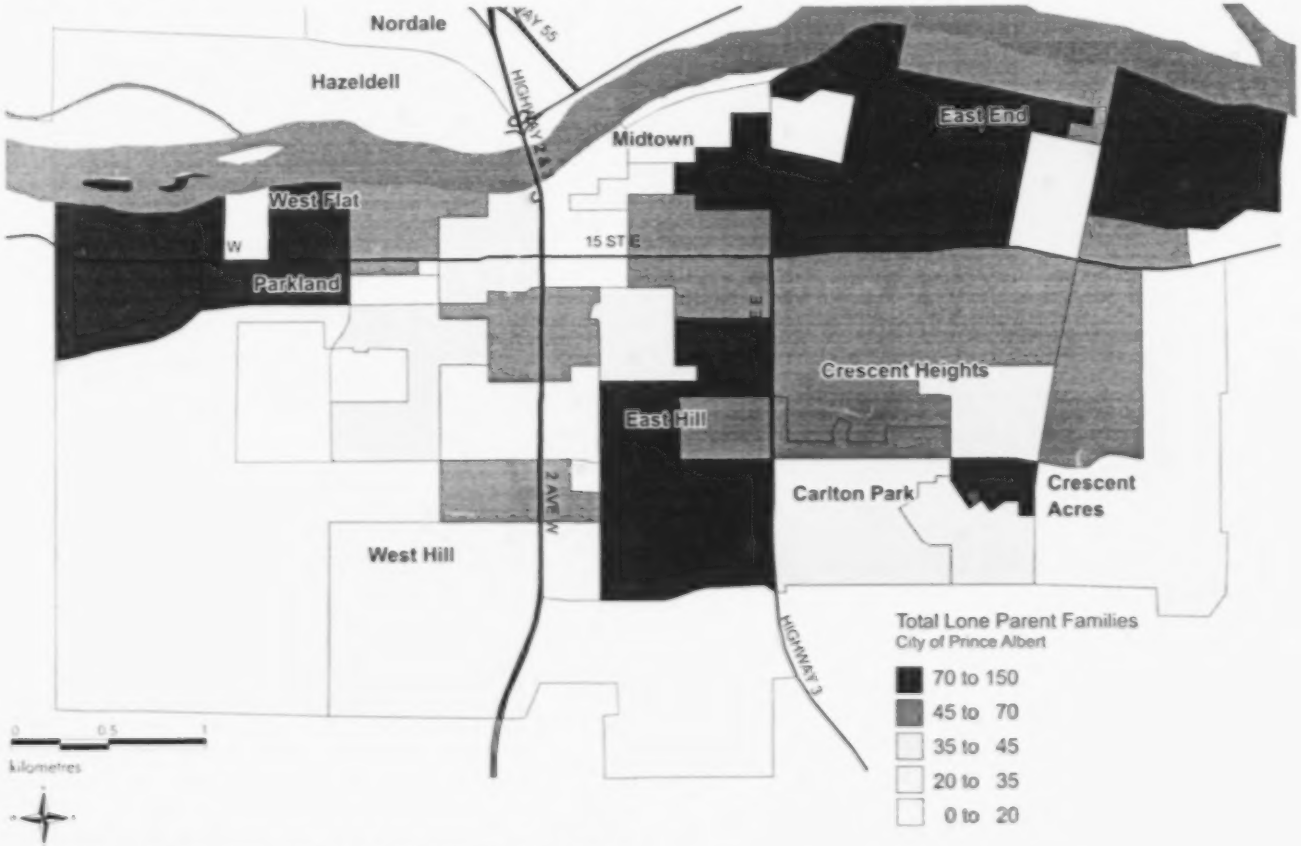
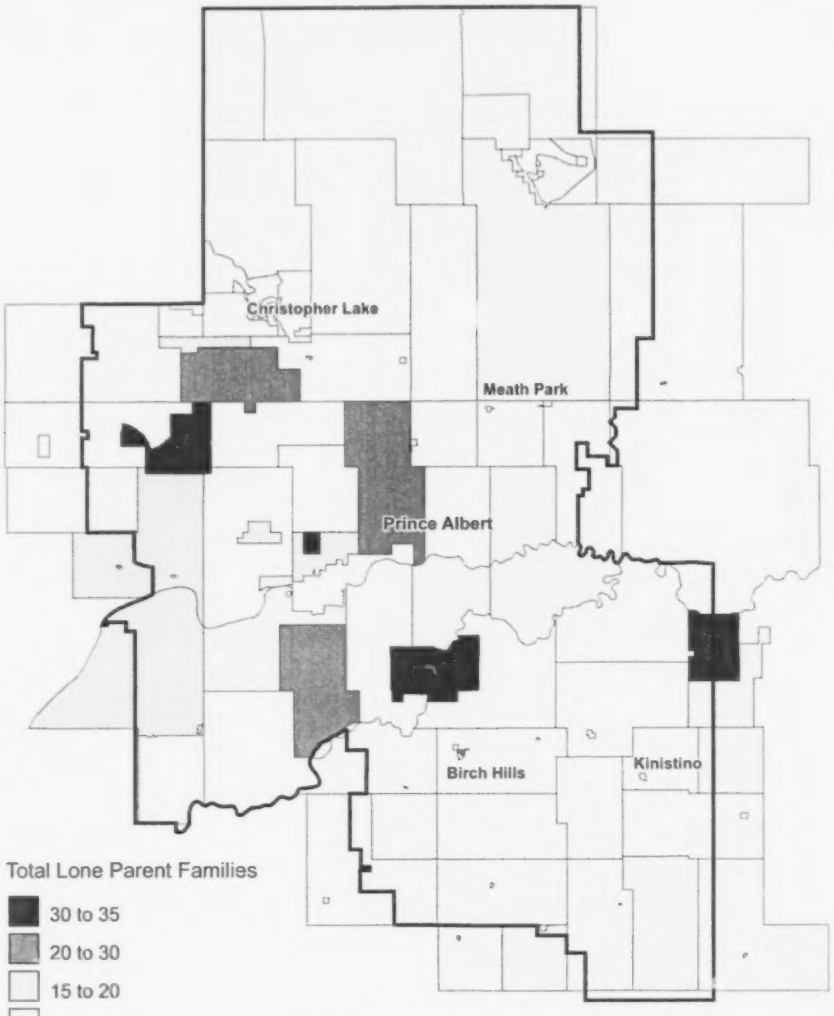
Map 9c (Urban): What areas were above and below the national average family income?



Map 10a (Urban): Which areas had the highest number of families headed by a lone parent?



Map 10b (Rural): Which areas had the highest number of families headed by a lone parent?



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Although lone parents accounted for about one in five family units in Prince Albert and area, the picture is radically different when comparing rural and urban portions of the study area. In the urban area, 32.7% of families (or about one in three families) were headed by a lone parent. Of this number, 3.9% were lone male parents and 28.8% were lone female parents. Rural areas present a stark contrast, with only 14.4% of households headed by a lone parent (Refer to **Tables 2** and **3** for more details).

When the data describing population mobility are compared to data describing family structure, many areas of the city with a high rate of mobility were also areas with large numbers of lone parents. This suggests that the neighbourhoods where many lone parents reside were fluctuating considerably and, therefore, were not likely able to provide the kind of stable support system needed by many lone parent families.

When compared to other areas of Saskatchewan, excluding the far North, Prince Albert had the highest rate of teenage pregnancy. About one in ten parents in Prince Albert were very young , choosing to keep and raise their children by themselves. Since these teenage parents are so young, they are typically not highly educated, frequently unemployed, frequently receive some form of social assistance, and are often mobile.

Infant Mortality

What was the infant mortality rate in Prince Albert?

Why ask this question?

Saskatchewan Health reports that the "infant mortality rate (IMR) is a universal indicator of population health status. It is widely regarded as the best single measure of general societal health and well-being. A high IMR in a population can be a reflection of deficiencies of physical and socio-economic factors such as nutrition, level of income, level of education, or access to health care.

Infant Mortality Rates are calculated on a yearly basis, and are expressed as "infant deaths per 1000 live births."

Source: Saskatchewan Health, 2000

- The infant mortality rate in Prince Albert was almost double the Canadian average and a third higher than the provincial average. **Table 5** illustrates this comparison.

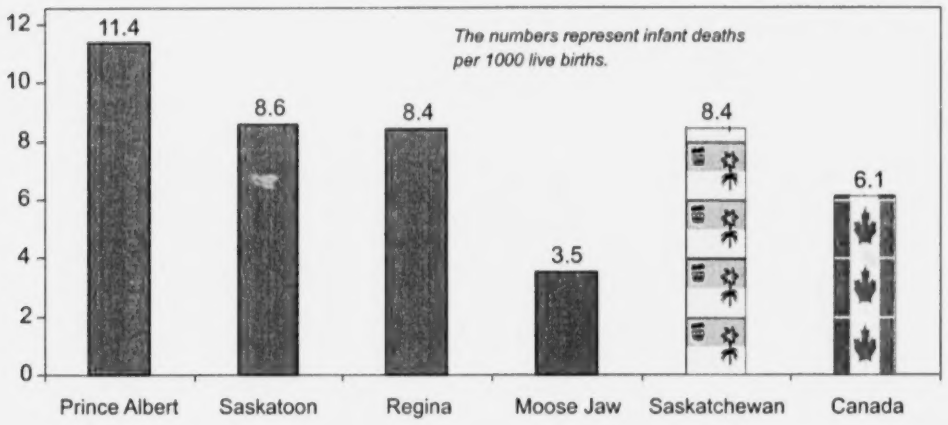
Putting it all together: Creating a Social Index

A Social Index was developed to help provide both a general picture of neighbourhoods within the broader community and the number of potential challenges they faced.

Nine variables were selected for their usefulness in describing the socio-economic context of communities, encompassing measures in the areas of education, employment, income level and multiculturalism. Each variable was compared with the national average, which provided a threshold for evaluating the neighbourhoods. This method enables us to make comparisons within a community, among communities, and at the same time, to compare a particular community to the country as a whole. Four categories were then established:

- Low risk (one or two challenges);
- Somewhat low risk (three or four challenges);
- Somewhat high risk (five or six challenges); and
- High risk (seven or more challenges).

Table 5 – Infant Mortality Rate



Source: Saskatchewan Health (2000)

The following is a listing of the nine variables that together make up the Social Index:

1. Unemployment rate;
2. Individual poverty rate;
3. Proportion of individuals 15 years and over without a high school diploma;
4. Proportion of families with children headed by a lone parent;
5. Proportion of the population speaking neither official language;
6. Proportion of the population that immigrated to Canada since 1991;
7. Mobility in one year;
8. Home ownership; and
9. Proportion of the total income in the EA coming from government transfer payments (i.e. Canadian Pension Plan, Canadian Child Tax Benefit, provincial social assistance payments).

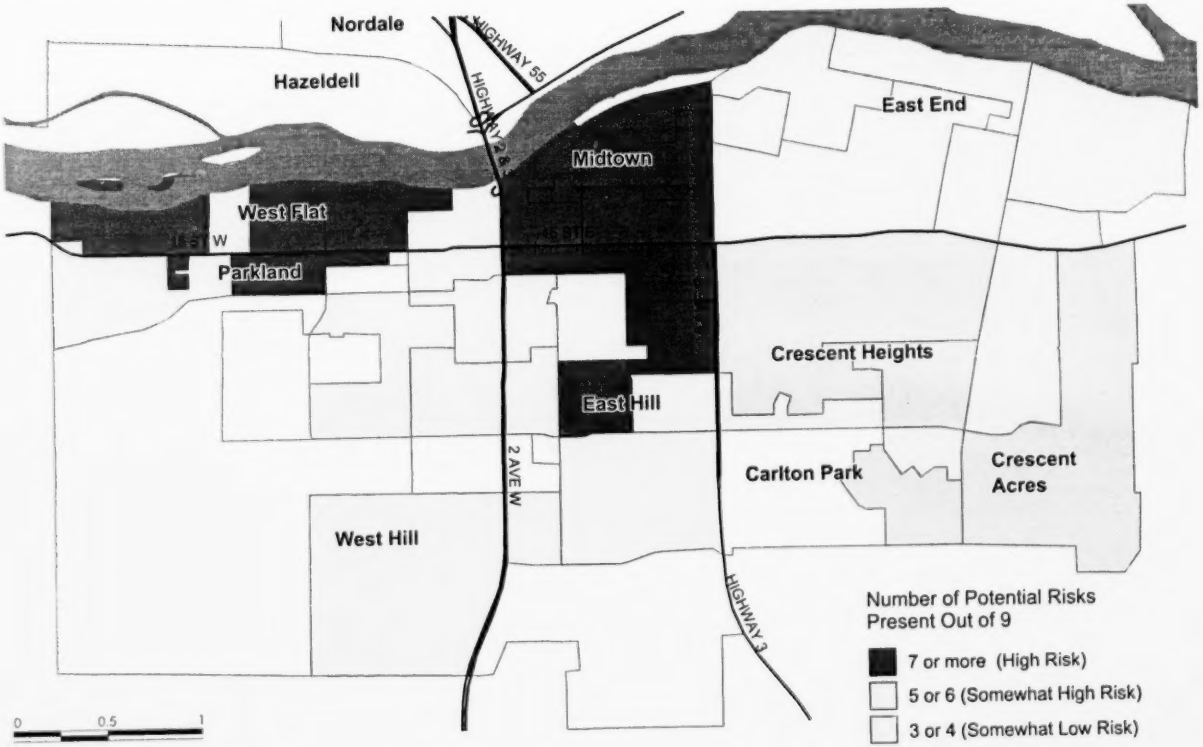
Maps 11a, b and c: What did the Social Index tell us about the communities in and around Prince Albert?

- Of the nine variables that make up the Social Index, only seven were relevant to Prince Albert and area. Since the *proportion of the population speaking neither official language* and the *proportion of the population that immigrated to Canada since 1991* was so low in and around Prince Albert, these two variables were not relevant to our local area. However, if we considered the number of families who move from the far North to Prince Albert and good control of the Standard English Dialect, these two variables would rate high in Prince Albert.
- Due to the sparse population of many rural Enumeration Areas, much of the Social Index data were not available. Therefore, the Social Index tells us little about rural sections of the study area.
- In urban neighbourhoods, the Social Index illustrates the high-risk characteristics of the West Flat, Parkland, Midtown and East Hill

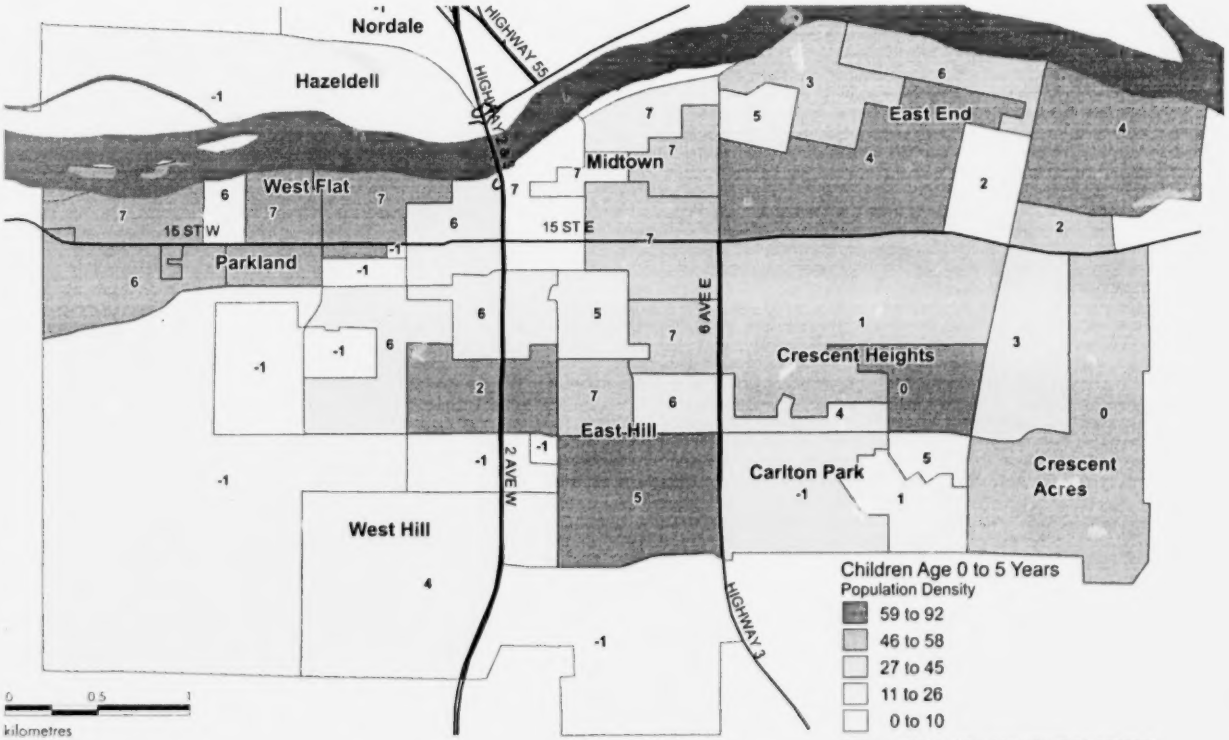
neighbourhoods of Prince Albert. (*Please refer to the* ***Map 15*** *series later in this report*).

Map 11b shows where children lived in relation to the Social Index. An especially large number of children living in high-risk social conditions resided in the West Flat and Parkland neighbourhoods.

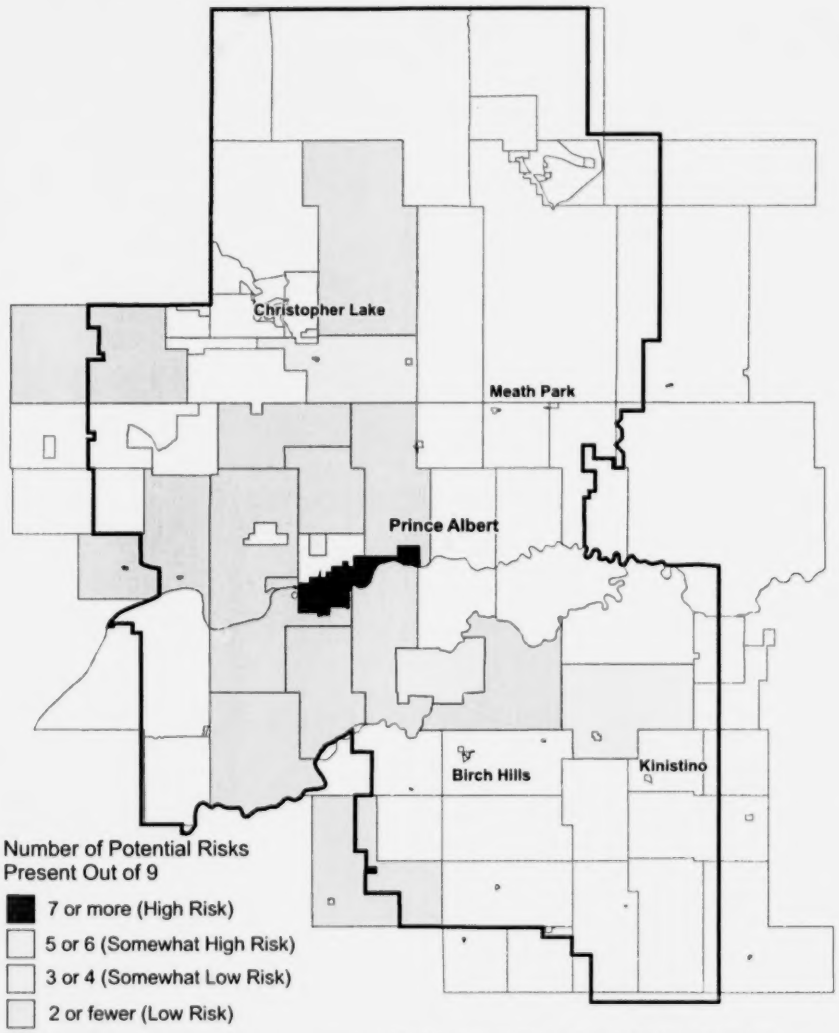
Map 11a (Urban): What did the Social Index tell us about the Prince Albert community?



Map 11b (Urban): Where did children aged 0 to 5 years live in relation to the Social index?



Map 11c (Rural): What did the Social Index tell us about the rural areas around Prince Albert?



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4. The Physical Environment

Current research exploring community affects on children's development places little emphasis on the physical characteristics of neighbourhoods. However, the quality of the physical environment in a community can affect the health and well-being of families and children.

This chapter focuses on the quality of the physical environment, collected through neighbourhood observations.

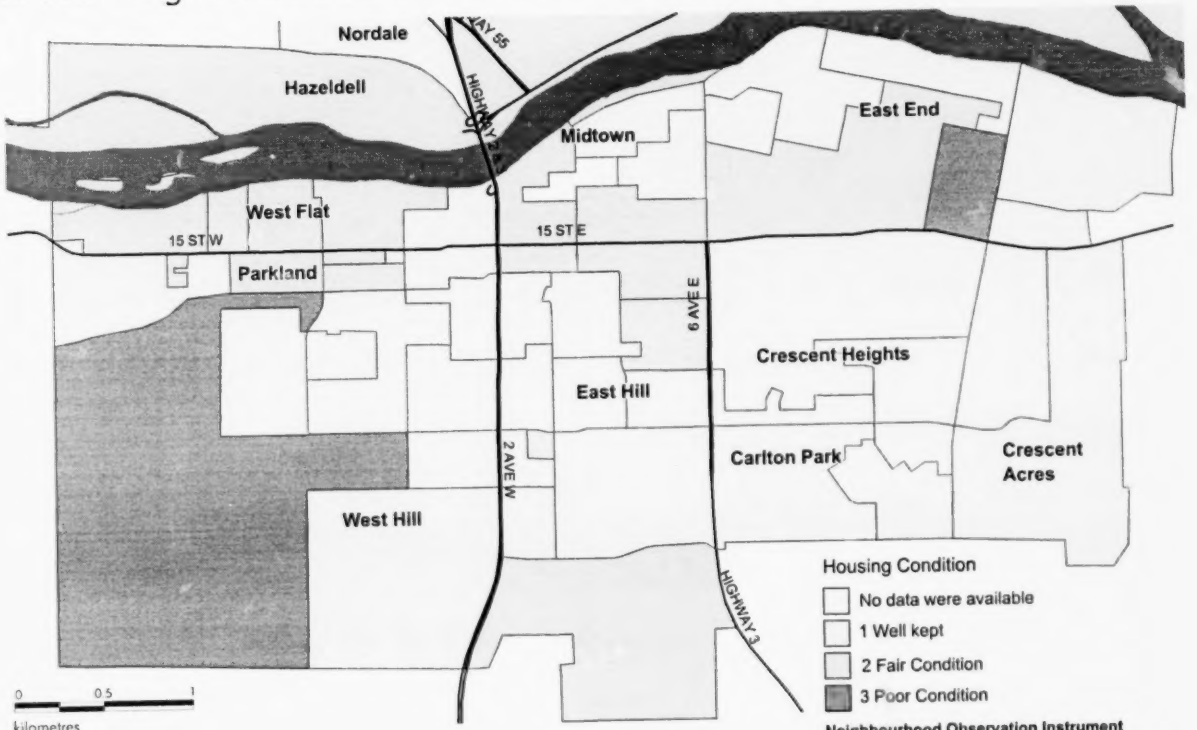
The neighbourhood observations component of the Community Mapping Study was designed to assess the physical and infrastructure aspects of the community. It looks at factors that may affect the development and behaviour of children, such as the quality of homes, street lighting conditions, traffic volume, and the presence and amount of parks and green space.

The Prince Albert UEY Project surveyed portions of 55 urban and 28 rural Enumeration Areas in the study area. The survey data indicated that the physical environment of Prince Albert and surrounding area did not pose a significant risk to children, youth and their families. Public spaces in urban and rural areas received a reasonable amount of care from municipal governments. There was a similarly high level of demonstrated care for private and corporate lands and buildings. Physical environment indicators such as high volumes of traffic, anti-social behaviour, excess litter or extensive noise were rarely observed.

Map 12: What was the general condition of buildings in Prince Albert?

- This map was typical of the data derived from the Neighbourhood Observation Instrument in that it shows that neighbourhoods in Prince Albert had a good physical environment.
- The amount of green space in urban areas is illustrated in the **Map 15** series found in Chapter 5 of this report.

Map 12: What was the general condition of buildings in Prince Albert? The results of the Neighbourhood Observation Instrument (2000)



5. The Neighbourhood Resources

This chapter considers the distribution of resources in the neighbourhoods of Prince Albert and discusses the implications of these findings.

Theories based on neighbourhood resources view the community itself as a resource for human development. Such theories imply that increased, along with appropriate availability of programs and services, will lead to an enrichment of experiences, more opportunities for development, access to social networks of support, and fewer chances of developing problems. Scarcity of resources, on the contrary, can result in reduced opportunities for enrichment, lack of supportive environments, and a higher need for preventive and corrective action. The provision of services can be expensive and labour intensive, therefore it is essential to ensure that they are effective and contain, overall, the best mix and the right coverage of services (refer to Jencks & Meyer, 1990, for a review of the theories of neighbourhood influences).

Resources in the neighbourhoods support parents by complementing their efforts to raise their children and support families and residents in their daily lives. By investigating the links between the quality and quantity of services available for children (such as health and social services, parks and recreation, and public services) with the developmental outcomes of children (such as emotional and cognitive development), communities can better evaluate the effectiveness of these resources and better determine how to distribute them.

How were services for children distributed in Prince Albert?

Why ask this question?

A community can help serve its residents by offering a range of programs and services to meet the needs of children. Programs can serve a variety of purposes. For example, they can be:

- Recreational activities (e.g., community sports teams);
- Educational experiences (e.g., nursery schools); and
- Intervention programs for when problems occur (e.g. family counselling services).

These programs may offer opportunities to increase one's quality of life through a learning or recreational experience, while at the same time increasing access to social networks of support.

Six program categories considered important to child development outcomes were examined:

1. Education;
2. Societal (for example, programs for special needs children);
3. Health and wellness services;
4. Sports and recreation;
5. Entertainment and culture; and
6. Special interest.

The UEY Project created an inventory of programs offering service to children and their families in the Prince Albert area. These were listed in a database and then mapped. The Community Resources database is available as a companion report to this Community Mapping Study.

Map 13: Where were the community resources located?

Resources in the neighbourhood support families and neighbourhood residents by complementing their efforts to raise children well. Investigating the links between the quality and quantity of services, and the developmental outcomes of children can assist communities in evaluating the effectiveness of their resources and how to most wisely distribute them. The available theories and empirical data indicate that the increased availability of high-quality, appropriate, accessible services will result in enriched experiences, positive developmental outcomes, support, and perhaps strengthening of existing social networks while reducing the incidence of negative outcomes.

- **Map 13** shows that a great number of the community resources were located in the midtown business district of Prince Albert. However – as in most urban areas – Prince Albert's population was not concentrated in the downtown business district. **Map 4a (Urban)** illustrates this point.

- Community resources were available in rural areas, particularly in the towns and villages surrounding Prince Albert. Unfortunately, detailed maps of rural areas are not available.

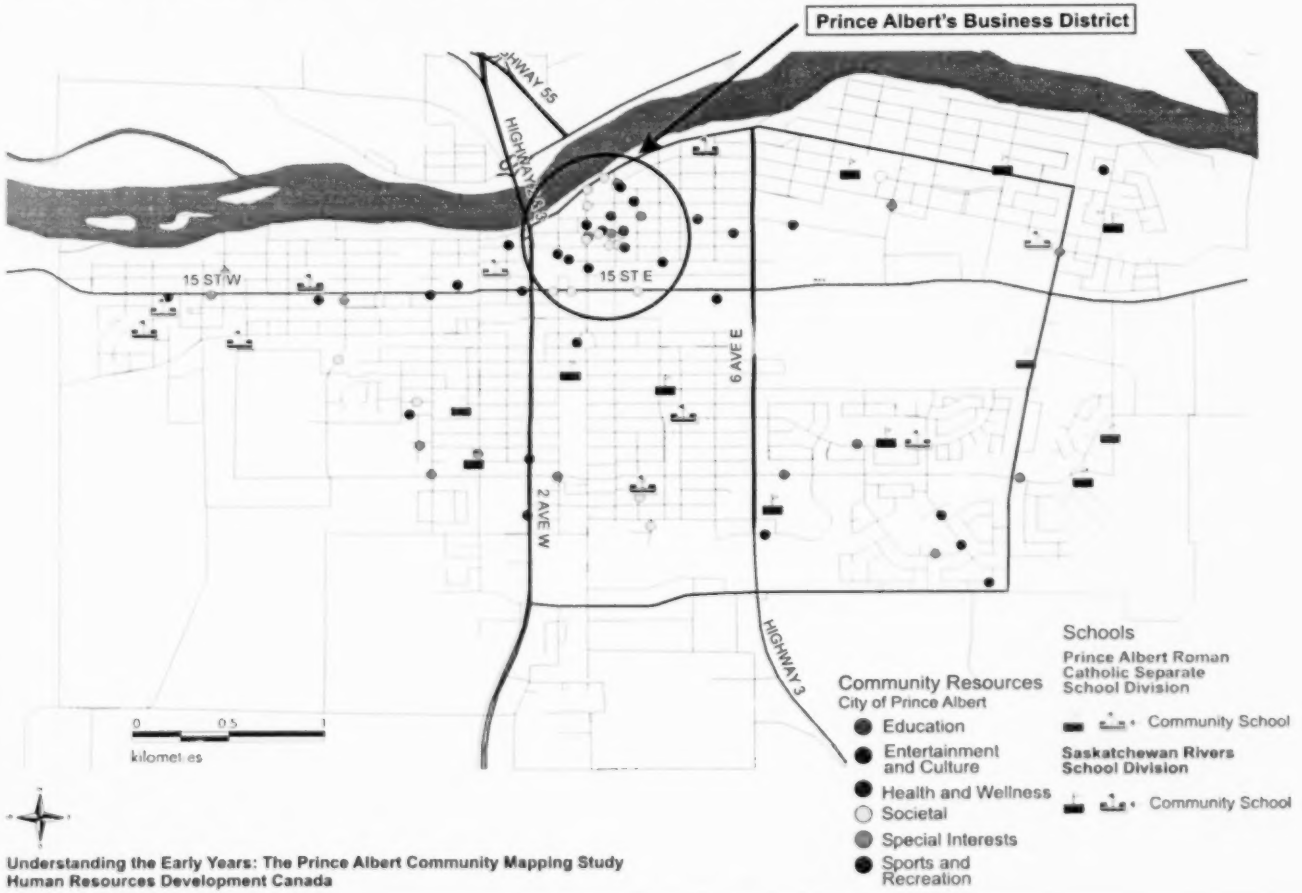
- This map shows that school buildings were distributed throughout the city and in a good position to provide human services in Prince Albert's various neighbourhoods. Similarly, in rural areas, schools were able to give space to human service providers and thus made these services available closer to where people lived. The next section – on Integrated School-linked Services – provides more information about this concept.

A review of the community resources in Prince Albert and area (Kuzkib, 2000) indicated that there were ten Agency Programs available including the Public Library's various offerings, preschools including French Immersion, The Prince Albert Literacy Network (especially its *Come Read With Me* program) in addition to the public and separate schools.

The Community Resources Survey indicated seven different types of Cultural and Entertainment Resources including pow wow dancing, music, gymnastics, dance, and several performing arts organizations. There were thirty-seven programs offering Health and Wellness opportunities for children including the Early Childhood Intervention Program for children with developmental delay, and the Early Childhood Team at the Therapies Department at the health district that provides integrated case assessment by physiotherapists, psychologists, and speech language pathologists. As well, there is a range of other health, nutrition, mental health, emergency and other support services. The YWCA houses the Child Mother Futures Program for pregnant women and their children as well as the Prince Albert Baby SAFE Program.

There are twenty-three Societal Programs available including family services, housing and wellness for women, a Prince Albert Share-A-Meal/Food Bank, Compassionate Friends, a Women's Shelter and a range of Social Services. There were twenty-five Special Interest Programs available including six preschools, thirteen daycares (including one infant day care at the largest public high school), five support programs that offered either support to parents or partially funded other arrangements. Finally, there were thirteen different types of programs available in the Sports and Recreation Centre including skiing, swimming, soccer, hockey, gymnastics and bowling.

Map 13: Where were the community resources located?



Integrated School-linked Services

The publication *Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth At Risk: Implementation Guide* (1994) offers the following outline of this concept:

> "Integrated School-Linked Services is an initiative of the provincial government in partnership with the Saskatchewan education system. It is a response to the growing numbers of children coming to school with complex social, emotional, health, and developmental problems. As part of Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children, Integrated School-Linked Services has a primary goal to help all children participate fully in school and succeed.

The advantages of basing the services within a school include:

- Students are able to access the services of other agencies easily and on an ongoing basis, with less disruption to their classroom work;
- A range of professionals can lend their assistance, ideas and support if an urgent situation arises;
- Professionals can communicate with each other to ensure common information and understandings;
- Parents can access service providers in one location; and
- Programming can involve the parents in their child's education (e.g. family literacy).

The term integrated *school-linked* services doesn't necessarily mean that services are school-based or located in the school. While they may be located in a school, these services may also be based in a community centre, a health centre, a day care centre or even within homes. In these cases, the integrated services are "school-linked" in that their efforts are linked to the school but are not necessarily located in it" (Saskatchewan Education, 1994, pages 3 and 6).

Social Housing

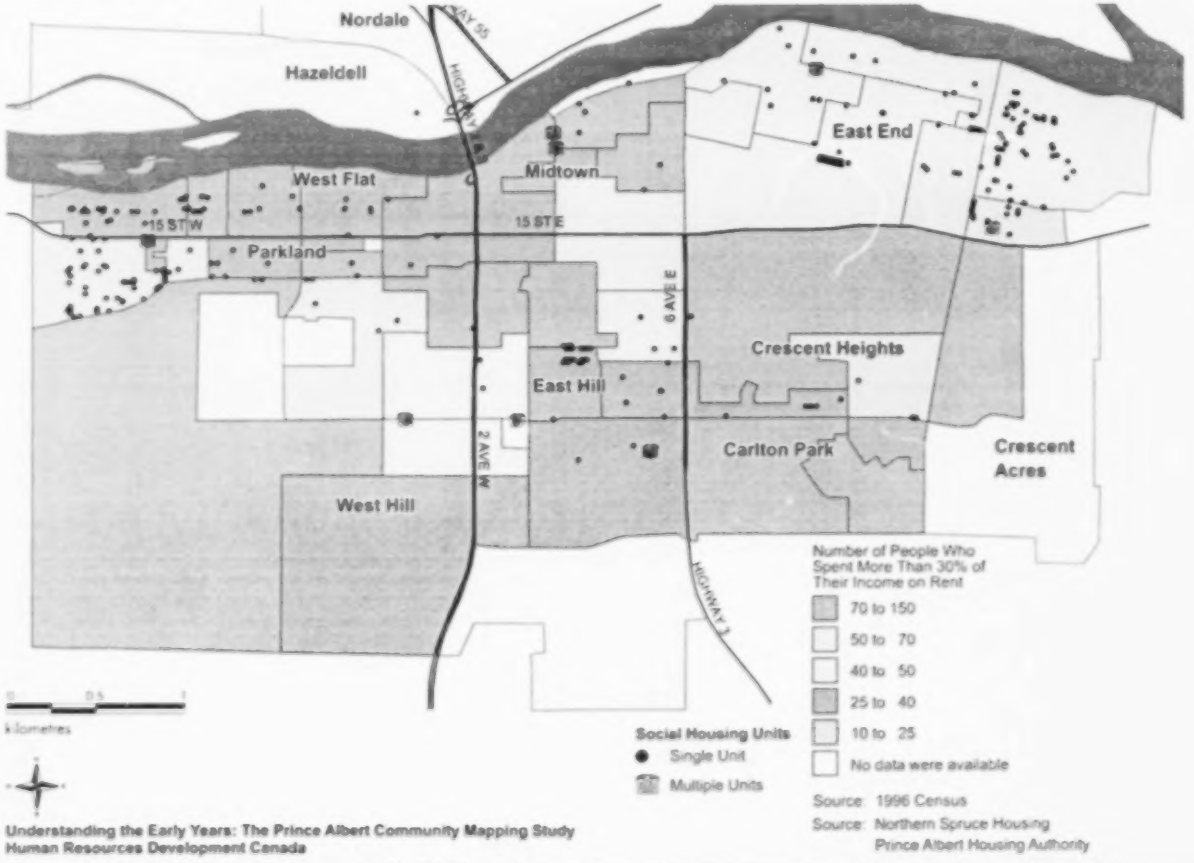
Access to affordable, safe and quality housing is one of the most fundamental needs common to all Canadians. At the same time, many families face difficulties in finding such housing, especially when they find themselves spending an increasing proportion of their income on shelter. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a family will experience a housing affordability problem when one-third or more of their household income is spent on shelter costs. In 1996, approximately 30% of all families renting their home spent one-third or more of their income on housing, with this burden falling heaviest upon young families and those headed by lone parents (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1998). This trend has increased over the past decade, particularly among lone parents.

With one-third of renting families in Canada over-burdened with shelter costs, the availability of community social housing is key to addressing the fundamental need of families for access to affordable, safe and quality housing.

Map 14: Where was the social housing located in relation to people who spend more than 30% of their income on rent?

- The bulk of social housing units were located in neighbourhoods with relatively high numbers of people who spend more than 30% of their income on rent. **Map 9c** illustrates that social housing was

Map 14 (Urban): Where was the social housing located in relation to people who spend more than 30% of their income on rent?



primarily found in neighbourhoods where the average family income was below the national average.

- The map shows most but not all social housing units in Prince Albert.

Since maps for rural areas are not available, rural social housing units could not be mapped.

Map 15: Prince Albert's Neighbourhoods

This series of maps **(Maps 15a to 15f)** illustrate the resources of each neighbourhood.

- Since Prince Albert is a small city, many services were in one location and provided service to the whole city. Such was the case for police, fire, ambulance and library services. Other community resources – like museums, swimming pools, art galleries and performing arts centres – had just a few locations that provided service to the whole community.

- Services distributed throughout the city included parks, rinks, community centres, churches, day care facilities and schools.

The Map 15 series identifies services neighbourhood by neighbourhood, as well as provides three smaller maps to indicate the Social Index, the average family income, and the population of children aged 0 to 5 years for each neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Summary: East End

The East End neighbourhood had a high density of children aged 0 to 5 years. However, day care facilities appeared to be lacking. The Social Index showed that most areas of this neighbourhood were "somewhat low risk" and the average family income was only slightly below the national average. There were many educational, spiritual and recreational facilities and services available in this neighbourhood.

Children from this neighbourhood are living in a lower risk social environment.

Neighbourhood Summary: Midtown

The Midtown neighbourhood had a relatively high density of children aged 0 to 5 years in some areas of the neighbourhood. Western areas of the neighbourhood comprise the central business district of the city. The Social Index showed that most areas of this neighbourhood were "high risk" and that the average family income was below the national average. Parks and playgrounds were lacking but the city library, museum and performing arts facilities are located here.

Children from this neighbourhood are living in a high risk social environment.

Neighbourhood Summary: Hazeldell and Nordale

The Hazeldell and Nordale neighbourhoods had a very small population. Therefore, many educational, spiritual and recreational services were provided south of the river. Also, their small population caused the Social Index data to be suppressed, therefore this measure was not available. Data about family income show that families earned above the national average.

Although not all the social data are available, it would appear that children from these neighbourhoods are living in a low-risk social environment.

Neighbourhood Summary: West Flat and Parkland

The West Flat and Parkland neighbourhoods presented the greatest number of social challenges in the City of Prince Albert. The Social Index showed that most areas of this neighbourhood were "high risk" and the average family income was below the national average. Since there was a high density of children aged 0 to 5 years living in these neighbourhoods, many additional human services have been directed to children, youth and their families.

Children in this area are living in a high-risk social environment.

Neighbourhood Summary: West Hill and East Hill

The West Hill and East Hill neighbourhoods presented somewhat of a contrast. In the East Hill neighbourhood, there were a number of areas where the Social Index indicated high risk and average family incomes were below the national average. The West Hill neighbourhood had families who earned incomes above the national average. However, much of the data for the Social Index had been suppressed and were therefore unavailable. Both neighbourhoods had educational, spiritual and recreational facilities and services available.

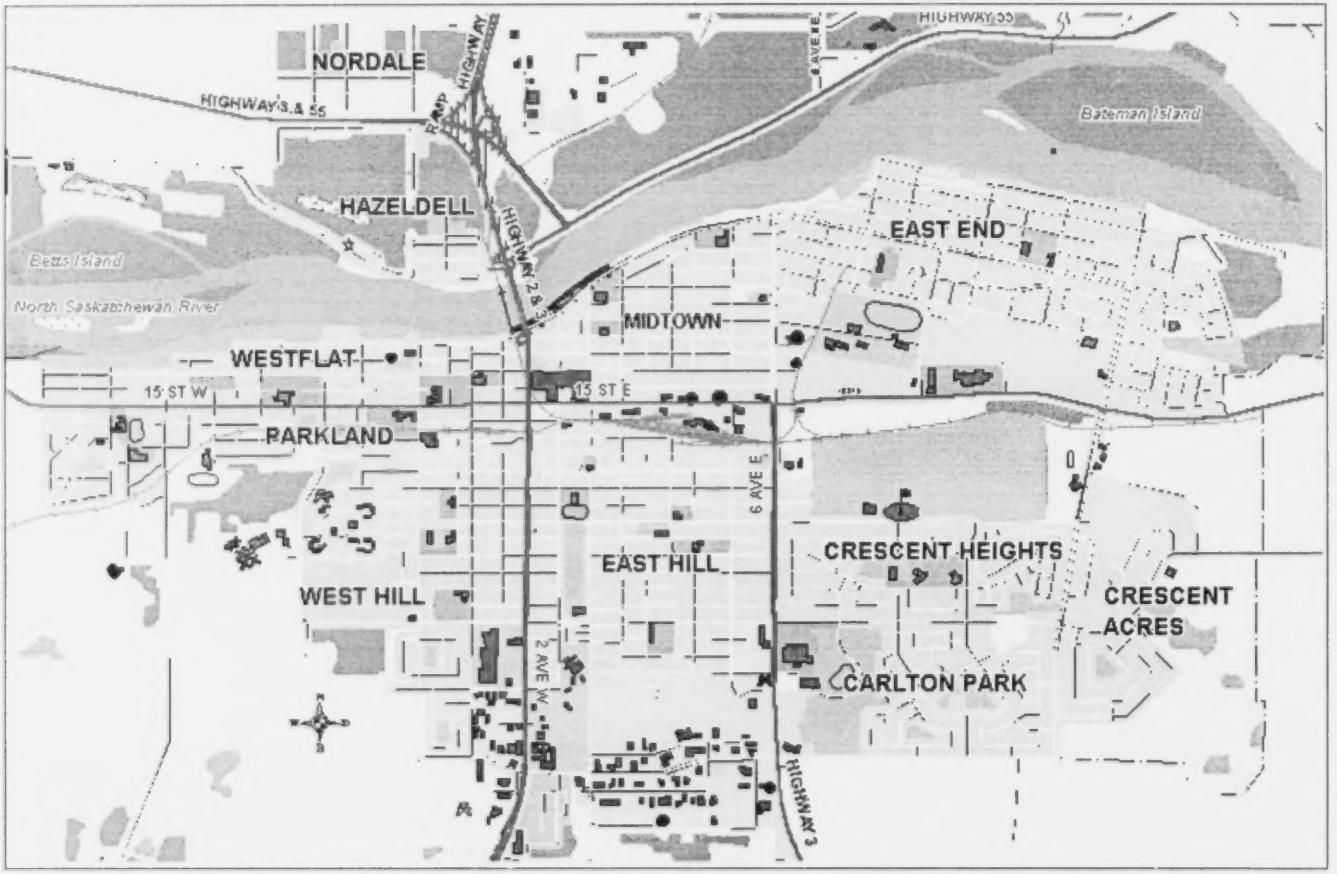
Children appear to be at low-risk in the West Hill neighbourhood whereas children of the East Hill neighbourhood live in a higher-risk social environment.

Neighbourhood Summary: Crescent Heights, Carlton Park and Crescent Acres

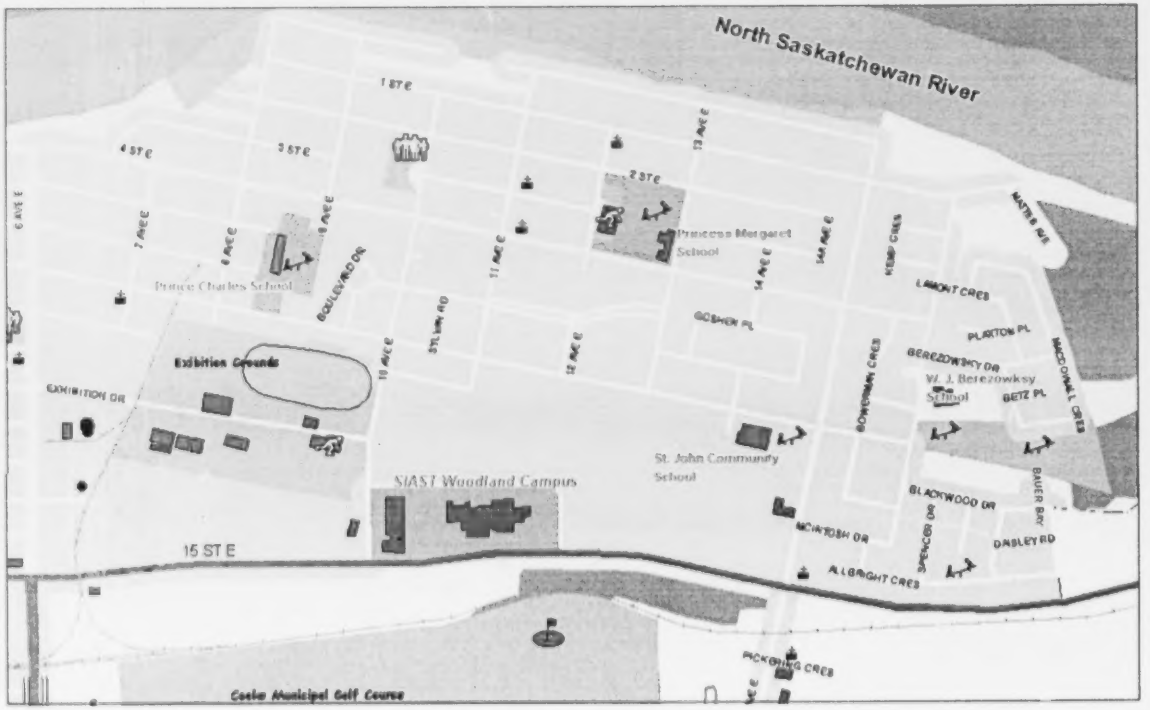
The Crescent Heights, Carlton Park and Crescent Acres neighbourhoods had a fairly high density of children aged 0 to 5 years. These children lived in neighbourhoods where the Social Index indicated a low risk social environment. The average family income was well above the national average and the neighbourhoods provided access to educational, spiritual and recreational facilities and services.

Although most people living in these neighbourhoods were relatively affluent, there are a few areas where the Social Index and average family incomes indicate children living at risk.

Map 15: Prince Albert's Neighbourhoods



Map 15a: The East End Neighbourhoods

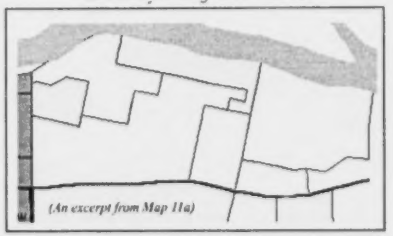


Parks
Major Buildings
Schools

✓ This resource is available in the neighbourhood.

Approximate Population of this neighbourhood: 6,686

What did the Social Index tell us about this neighbourhood?



Number of Potential Risks Present Out of 9

- 7 or more (High Risk)
- 5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
- 3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
- 2 or fewer (Low Risk)
- No data were available

Selected Neighbourhood Resources

- Museum
- Community Club ✓
- Rink ✓
- Performing Arts
- Day Care
- Library
- Art Gallery
- Swimming Pool
- Playground ✓
- Church ✓

The East End Neighbourhoods

What areas in these neighbourhoods were above or below the national average family income?

*(An excerpt from **Map 9c**)*

Average Family Income
City of Prince Albert

- Above National Average
- Below National Average
- No data were available

The Average Family Income for each enumeration area is displayed

National Average Family Income: $45,739

Source: 1996 Census

Where did the children age 0 to 5 years live in these neighbourhoods in relation to the Social Index?

*(An excerpt from **Map 11b**)*

Children Age 0 to 5 Years
Population Density

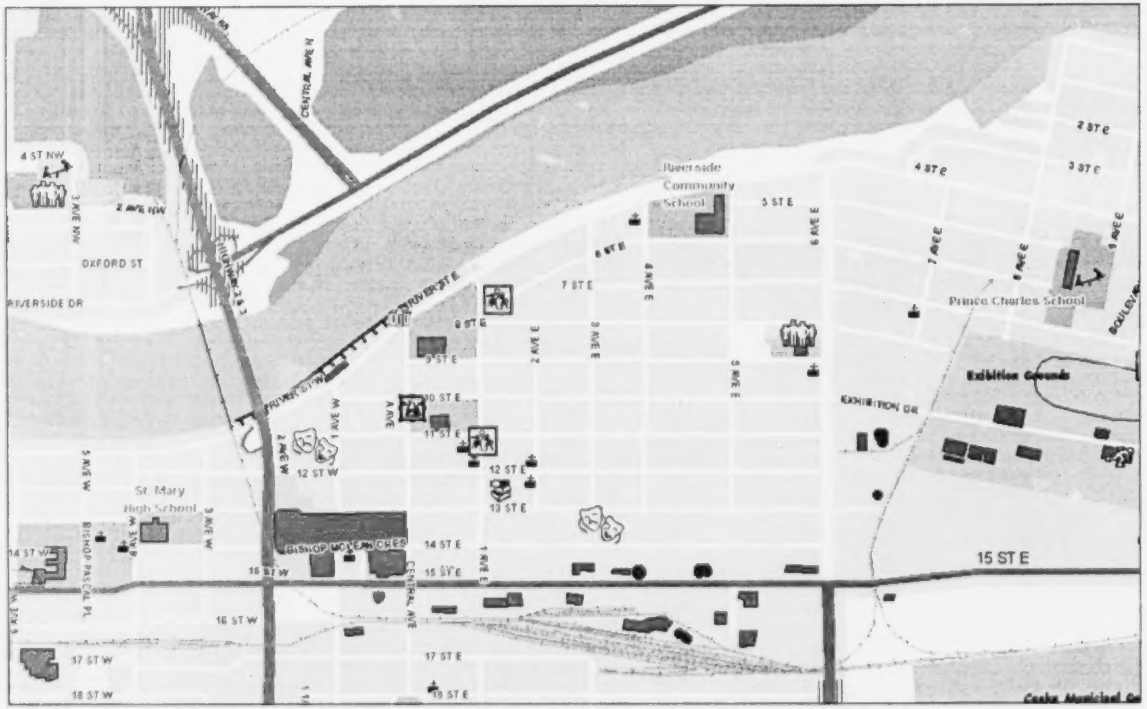
- 59 to 92
- 46 to 58
- 27 to 45
- 11 to 26
- 0 to 10

Source: Prince Albert Health District (2000)

Social Index

7 or more (High Risk)
5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
2 or fewer (Low Risk)
-1 = No data were available

Map 15b: The Midtown Neighbourhood



Parks

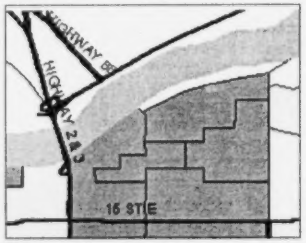
Major Buildings

Schools

✓ This resource is available in the neighbourhood.

Approximate Population of this neighbourhood: 3,056

What did the Social Index tell us about this neighbourhood?



(An excerpt from Map 11a)

Number of Potential Risks Present Out of 9

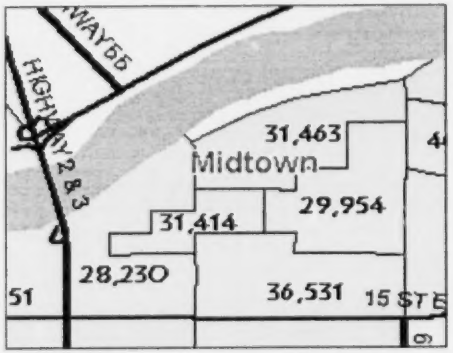
- 7 or more (High Risk)
- 5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
- 3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
- 2 or fewer (Low Risk)
- No data were available

Selected Neighbourhood Resources

- Museum ✓
- Library ✓
- Community Club ✓
- Art Gallery ✓
- Rink
- Swimming Pool
- Performing Arts ✓
- Playground ✓
- Day Care ✓
- Church ✓

The Midtown Neighbourhood

What areas in these neighbourhoods were above or below the national average family income?



(An excerpt from Map 9c)

Average Family Income
City of Prince Albert

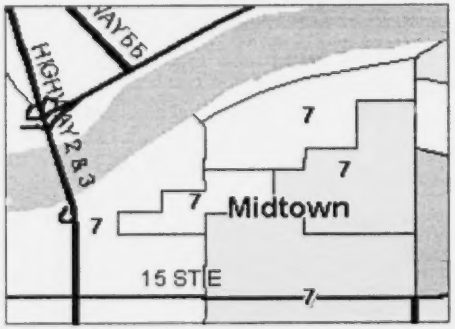
- Above National Average
- Below National Average
- No data were available

The Average Family Income for each enumeration area is displayed

National Average Family Income: $45,739

Source: 1996 Census

Where did the children age 0 to 5 years live in these neighbourhoods in relation to the Social Index?



(An excerpt from Map 11b)

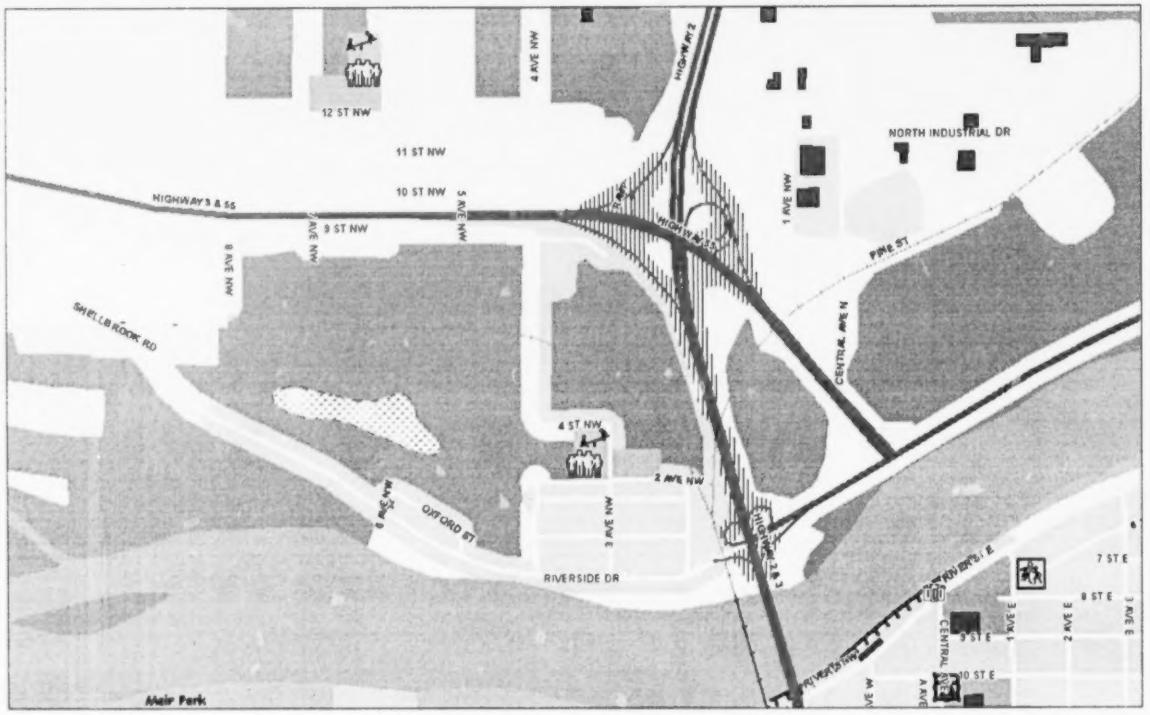
Children Age 0 to 5 Years
Population Density

- 59 to 92
- 46 to 58
- 27 to 45
- 11 to 26
- 0 to 10

Source: Prince Albert Health District (2000)

Social Index
7 or more (High Risk)
5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
2 or fewer (Low Risk)
-1 = No data were available

Map 15c: The Hazeldell and Nordale Neighbourhoods



Parks
Major Buildings
Schools

✓ This resource is available in the neighbourhood.

Approximate Population of this neighbourhood: 769

What did the Social Index tell us about this neighbourhood?

Number of Potential Risks Present Out of 9

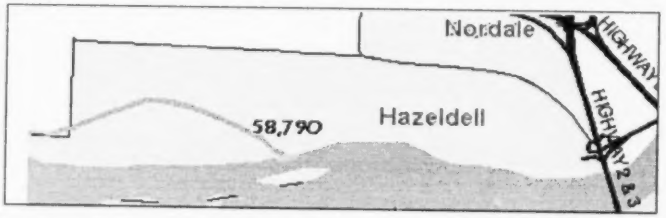
- 7 or more (High Risk)
- 5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
- 3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
- 2 or fewer (Low Risk)
- No data were available

Selected Neighbourhood Resources

- Museum
- Community Club ✓
- Rink
- Performing Arts
- Day Care
- Library
- Art Gallery
- Swimming Pool
- Playground ✓
- Church

The Hazeldell and Nordale Neighbourhoods

What areas in these neighbourhoods were above or below the national average family income?



*(An excerpt from **Map 9c**)*

Average Family Income
City of Prince Albert

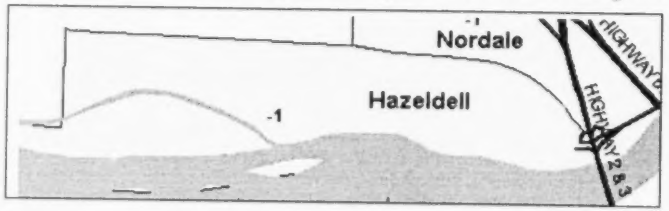
- Above National Average
- Below National Average
- No data were available

The Average Family Income for each enumeration area is displayed

National Average Family Income: $45,739

Source: 1996 Census

Where did the children age 0 to 5 years live in these neighbourhoods in relation to the Social Index?



*(An excerpt from **Map 11b**)*

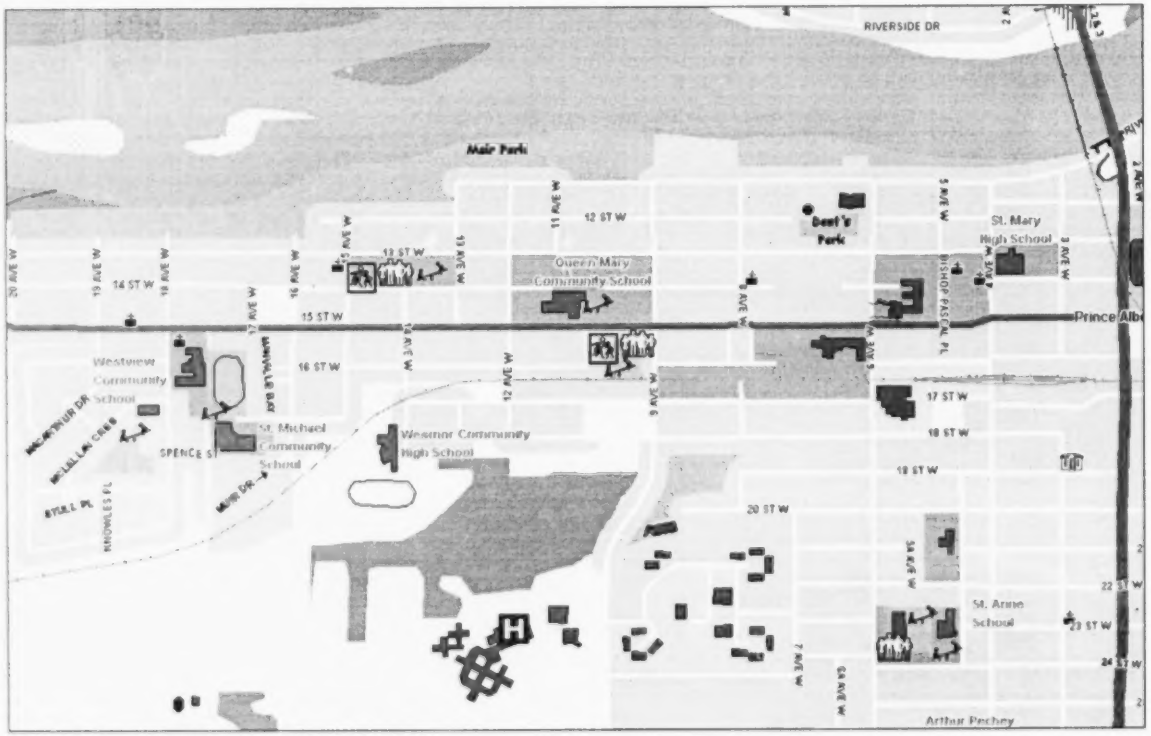
Children Age 0 to 5 Years
Population Density

- 59 to 92
- 46 to 58
- 27 to 45
- 11 to 26
- 0 to 10

Source: Prince Albert Health District (2000)

Social Index
7 or more (High Risk)
5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
2 or fewer (Low Risk)
-1 = No data were available

Map 15d: The West Flat and Parkland Neighbourhoods

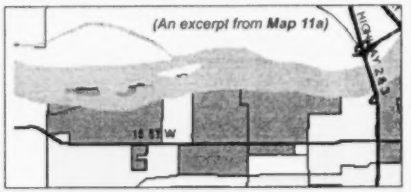


Parks
Major Buildings
Schools

✓ This resource is available in the neighbourhood.

Approximate Population of this neighbourhood: 5,875

What did the Social Index tell us about this neighbourhood?



Number of Potential Risks Present Out of 9

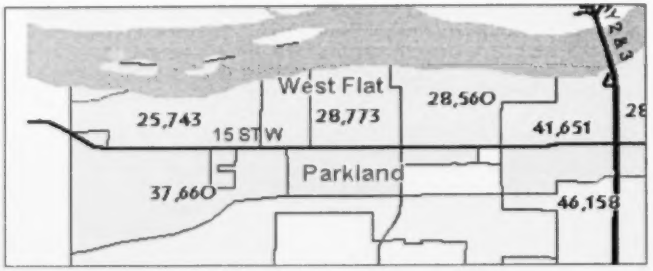
- 7 or more (High Risk)
- 5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
- 3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
- 2 or fewer (Low Risk)
- No data were available

Selected Neighbourhood Resources

Museum	Library
Community Club ✓	Art Gallery
Rink	Swimming Pool ✓
Performing Arts	Playground ✓
Day Care ✓	Church ✓

The West Flat and Parkland Neighbourhoods

What areas in these neighbourhoods were above or below the national average family income?



*(An excerpt from **Map 9c**)*

Average Family Income
City of Prince Albert

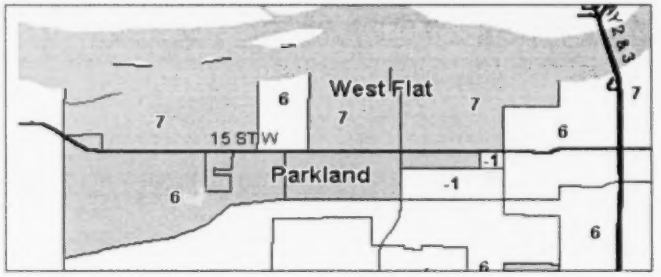
- Above National Average
- Below National Average
- No data were available

The Average Family Income for each enumeration area is displayed

National Average Family Income: $45,739

Source: 1996 Census

Where did the children age 0 to 5 years live in these neighbourhoods in relation to the Social Index?



*(An excerpt from **Map 11b**)*

Children Age 0 to 5 Years
Population Density

- 59 to 92
- 46 to 58
- 27 to 45
- 11 to 26
- 0 to 10

Source: Prince Albert Health District (2000)

Social Index
7 or more (High Risk)
5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
2 or fewer (Low Risk)
-1 = No data were available

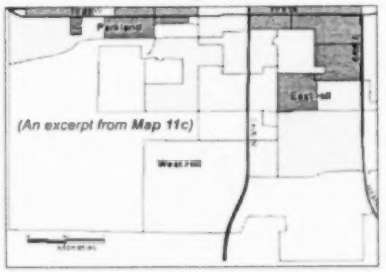
Map 15e: The West Hill and East Hill Neighbourhoods

Parks
Major Buildings
Schools

✓ This resource is available in the neighbourhood.

Approximate Population of this neighbourhood: 14,221

What did the Social Index tell us about this neighbourhood?



Number of Potential Risks Present Out of 9

- 7 or more (High Risk)
- 5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
- 3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
- 2 or fewer (Low Risk)
- No data were available

Selected Neighbourhood Resources

- Museum ✓
- Community Club ✓
- Rink ✓
- Performing Arts
- Day Care
- Library
- Art Gallery
- Swimming Pool
- Playground ✓
- Church ✓

The West Hill and East Hill Neighbourhoods

What areas in these neighbourhoods were above or below the national average family income?

Average Family Income
City of Prince Albert

- Above National Average
- Below National Average
- No data were available

The Average Family Income for each enumeration area is displayed

National Average Family Income: $45,739

Source: 1996 Census

Where did the children age 0 to 5 years live in these neighbourhoods in relation to the Social Index?

Children Age 0 to 5 Years
Population Density

- 59 to 92
- 46 to 58
- 27 to 45
- 11 to 26
- 0 to 10

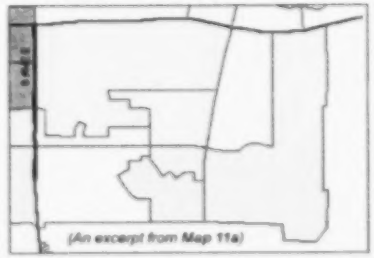
Source: Prince Albert Health District (2000)

Social Index

7 or more (High Risk)
5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
2 or fewer (Low Risk)
-1 = No data were available

Map 15f: The Crescent Heights, Carlton Park and Crescent Acres Neighbourhoods

What did the Social Index tell us about this neighbourhood?



Number of Potential Risks Present Out of 9

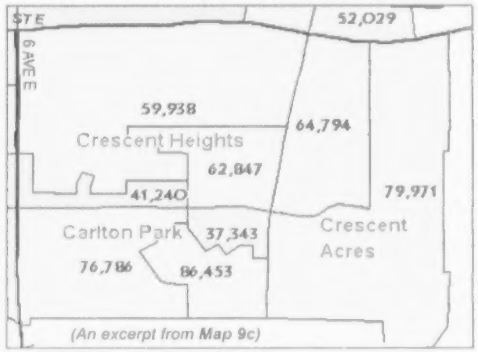
- 7 or more (High Risk)
- 5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
- 3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
- 2 or fewer (Low Risk)
- No data were available

Selected Neighbourhood Resources

Museum	Library
Community Club ✓	Art Gallery
Rink ✓	Swimming Pool ✓
Performing Arts	Playground ✓
Day Care ✓	Church ✓

The Crescent Heights, Carlton Park and Crescent Acres Neighbourhoods

What areas in these neighbourhoods were above or below the national average family income?



Average Family Income
City of Prince Albert

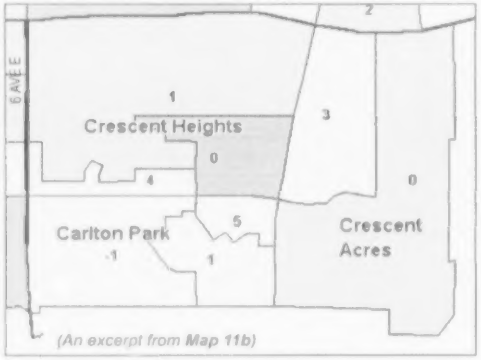
- Above National Average
- Below National Average
- No data were available

The Average Family Income for each enumeration area is displayed

National Average Family Income: $45,739

Source: 1996 Census

Where did the children age 0 to 5 years live in these neighbourhoods in relation to the Social Index?



Children Age 0 to 5 Years
Population Density

- 59 to 92
- 46 to 58
- 27 to 45
- 11 to 26
- 0 to 10

Source: Prince Albert Health District (2000)

Social Index
7 or more (High Risk)
5 or 6 (Somewhat High Risk)
3 or 4 (Somewhat Low Risk)
2 or fewer (Low Risk)
-1 = No data were available

6. Using the Research to Inform Community Action

Action based on knowledge is more focused and effective. It requires putting together the demonstration of need with an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and interventions.

> *It is one thing to have access to new data and information, and another thing to use it effectively with relevant decision-makers, policy makers and interested community groups.*

This chapter summarizes some of the key finding emerging from the Community Mapping Study—findings selected because they point to potential areas of need, areas with either gaps or duplications in services, or unbalanced patterns of resource distribution. Along with the data from the Early Development Instrument and the NLSCY-Community Study, the synthesis of this information in *Understanding the Early Years, Early Childhood Development in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan* will provide new evidence to help guide Prince Albert with the development of community strategies designed to improve child development outcomes.

Key Finding Emerging From the Community Mapping Study

Engaging in a process of mapping various aspects of your community causes the community to become aware of itself in a new way. It allows the community to see itself "with new eyes" and this new type of perspective encourages both detailed and more global analyses and stimulates an urgency for action in response to what has been learned. This study enabled our community to examine itself along a number of different continua.

Because the information provided was visual, it encouraged

- Integration of information, and
- Broad involvement and participation of the whole community in making meaning of the results.

Our mapping study has enabled the community to conclude the following:

- The land is used primarily for residential purposes. Parks and maintained green spaces are prevalent throughout the city.
- The family structures in the rural and urban areas are radically different. Twice the number of couples lived common law in the city and there are almost three times as many lone female families in the city as in the rural area. While 80.4% of the couples are married in the rural areas, only 57.3% are married in the city.
- Only 44% of the population has some form of post-secondary education; 26% of the population has not achieved a high school diploma.
- Prince Albert has a very mobile population; over half the city has mobility rates between 20% and 60% during the past year. Most mobility is motivated by risk conditions whereas some mobility suggests positive changes for families. Although much of the data was suppressed for the rural area, there was considerably less mobility indicated.
- The unemployment rate is high in Prince Albert; in a significant number of areas more than 40% of the population is unemployed. Frequently, the areas of high unemployment also have large numbers of young children.

- Over half the population in the city has an income under the national average. A recent Prince Albert Health District Assessment of Community Needs and Capacities (1999) indicated that 25% of its population has an income of less than $20,000 per year. These low-income areas also represent the areas where large numbers of young children reside.

- The infant mortality rate, which is a universal indicator of population health status, suggests that Prince Albert has double the Canadian average of infant deaths per 1000 live births and is almost 30% higher than the Saskatchewan average.

- The Social Index indicates that over half the city is represented by high risk or somewhat high-risk indicators. The largest numbers of children 0-5 years of age live in neighbourhoods that have very high or high risk according to the Social Index. It is worthy to note that two of the nine factors are not prevalent in Prince Albert (immigration and speaking neither official language) but if immigration from the far North and lack of good control of the Standard English Dialect were considered Prince Albert could score as high as nine in a considerable number of areas. When families move from the far North their diet changes radically and their food preparation practices also need to change significantly.

- Since a great deal of the rural data was suppressed, the Social Index was not available for the rural areas. We need to continue to work toward a more viable representation of the rural data.

- Although there are a large number of community resources available in Prince Albert, many of them are located in the downtown corridor where few people live. This could make access more of a potential challenge than availability. Schools, however, are distributed throughout the study area and are the base for many integrated services.

Non-UEY Efforts in Prince Albert Related to the Early Years

Making a Difference: Minus Nine to Three Years—A Companion Project

The *Making a Difference: Minus Nine to Three Years* Project was an applied research project which sought to answer a rather fundamental question: "What conditions must be created in Prince Albert and area to support optimal well-being for all children from conception to three years of age?"

The *Making a Difference* (MAD) Project made numerous recommendations to the community. It used the concept of creating a "strong start" for infants as the basis for all of its recommendations. The final report of the *Making a Difference* Project described this concept as follows:

> A strong start is the heart and soul of nurturing infants and toddlers—a path well worn from centuries of use, transcending cultures and eras. This simple strong start model was adapted to capture our chosen direction to strengthen the protective systems for healthy beginnings in the early years for all children in Prince Albert and area.
>
> A strong start for children is based on providing positive sensory stimulation – including guided learning experiences – through warm, sensitive, responsive relationships with parents or caregivers. Together with nutritious food and safe

shelter, this strong start provides early interactions and experiences as well as the support of the whole community, and facilitates optimal brain growth and development (page 6).

The research and recommendations of the Making a Difference report will assist the community as it uses research to inform community action.

Non-UEY Findings Related to the Economic Well-Being of Prince Albert

Prosperity

Stabler and Olfert (1998) listed several indicators of economic prosperity for the Prince Albert Planning area:

- Prince Albert's business sector "is well established with considerably more types of business than other Secondary Wholesale Retail Centres in the province";
- The Prince Albert region "benefits from its proximity to the north which has resulted in the development of processing, manufacturing and tourism industries"; and
- Economic growth is evident:
  - The manufacturing sector grew between 1991 and 1996;
  - The average income of the full-time employed is the third highest of all regions of the province;
  - There was a net increase in the Prince Albert region's labour force of 7.5% between 1991 and 1996; and
  - Average incomes have increased since 1991 from 6.5% to as much as 14% depending on the category. (Page 57)

A recent consultation document by the Government of Saskatchewan, *Partnership for Prosperity* (2000), discussed indicators of the province's prosperity. The following is a selected list of these indicators:

- The percentage of children living in poverty decreased from 1989 to 1997;
- From 1992 to 1998 Saskatchewan's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita grew at an average annual rate of 3.3%, the highest growth rate in the country;
- In 2000, there were 17,000 fewer social assistance recipients in Saskatchewan than there were five years ago; and
- The real value of Saskatchewan's exports increased 53% from 1990 to 1999.

Partnerships for Prosperity emphasized the need for grassroots involvement to enhance prosperity. In Saskatchewan "businesses, communities and local governments are working through Regional Economic Development Authorities, Community Regional Economic Development Organizations and other community-based organizations to foster business growth. Through neighbourhood development organizations, people and agencies are working together to improve their neighbourhoods both socially and economically. An example of a neighbourhood development organization in Prince Albert is the River Bank Development Corporation which coordinates business training programs, employment training and affordable housing initiatives" (page 12).

Strategies to enhance grassroots economic development should be part of any action plan for children. Strengthening economic opportunities, expanding adult education, and updating school to work transition programs would assist many families – families who currently live in poverty, who reside in poor housing, who have difficulty providing sufficient nutrition and who must cope with

many other social and economic challenges.

Non-UEY Findings and Activities related to the Social Environment

Poverty and Nutrition

Undernutrition "harms children silently" (Prince Albert and Area's Intersectoral Applied Research Project, 2002, p. 74). "By robbing children of their natural human potential....undernutrition begins to 'exact its toll even before the child is born'" (Centre on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy, 1998, p. 5). Child hunger, which is defined by "inadequate nutrient intake during the early years, is capable of producing progressive handicaps – impairments which can remain throughout life" (1998, p. 5). However, these long term effects may be reduced or eliminated by a combination of adequate food intake and environmental (home, school, and community) support thereby safeguarding cognitive development and helping to insure good health in the early years (1998, p. 7 - 8).

Undernourishment in pregnant women increases the likelihood of low birthweight babies who, in turn, are more likely to suffer developmental delays (Centre on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy, 1998, p. 5).

Infant feeding practices are less than optimal says Heather McAvoy (2002), Nutritionist for the Prince Albert and Parkland Health Districts. Although the breastfeeding rate at discharge from the hospital ranges from 70-75% between 1982 and 1997, by six months of age very few infants (between 4% and 5%) are still being breastfed (1982, 1994, 1997, Prince Albert Health Region). Early infant feeding practices can also affect the risk for diabetes and heart disease. The lowest incidence occurs in breast-fed infants who receive no solids until at least four months of age. The highest incidence occurs in bottle-fed infants who have solid food introduced in early infancy (Belch, 2002)

In turn, these less than adequate infant feeding practices lead to iron deficiency, which has a profound effect on the ways young children play, learn and engage with adults and the environment around them in both the preschool and school years. Children's cognitive (most especially attention span and memory) and social development appears to be compromised by iron deficiency. Almost one quarter of all low-income children in the United States are affected by iron deficiency anemia (Centre on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, 1998, p. 7). However, these children face a double jeopardy – not only are they more likely to be anemic but they are also more likely to live in an environment where the risk of lead poisoning is high. High lead levels result in neurodevelopmental disorders (1998, p. 5).

There is a higher than average rate of obesity and Type II diabetes in this area suggests McAvoy (2002). This is due to nutritional practices and exercise habits of the population as well as the large Aboriginal population, who is especially prone to Type II diabetes. Food security issues are at the heart of many of these challenges.

A comparison of the five-year statistics from the Prince Albert Share-A-Meal Food Bank (Clayton, 2002) indicates that from 1996 until 2001 there has been:

- A 21% increase in the number of adults and a 35% increase in the number of children under 18 years of age utilizing these services – 4066 children in 2001;

- A 33% increase in the number of single parents utilizing these services;
- A 40% increase in the number of couples with children utilizing these services;
- A relatively constant proportional ratio (approximately 3:2) of referrals between dual and lone parent families. Single parents (59% in 1996 and 58% in 2001), couples with children (41% in 1996 and 42% in 2001). Contrary to public wisdom there are almost as many dual parent referrals as single parent referrals; and
- A 22% increase in the number of new referrals and a total increase in all referrals of 17%.

This indicates a very significant increase in food security issues for children in both single parent and dual parent homes. Many of these food security issues are economically based. Our mapping study indicated that about half the population in the city had incomes below the national average of $45,739. However, a recent Prince Albert Health District Assessment of Community Needs and Capacities (1999) indicates that 25% of the population has an income less than $20,000. A comparison of **Maps 2** and **9c** suggests that the largest numbers of children are found in those Enumeration Areas where household incomes are in the twenty thousand dollar range indicating that the food security issues are often marked in households with the largest numbers of young children.

Nutrition programs were implemented in Saskatchewan's Community School Program in 1983 although community schools were established in 1980. The objective of these programs was to "bring together the school and the community so that both could focus on the problems of inadequate nutrition of school children" (Stupnikoff, 2002, Addendum 1, p. 1). As time unfolded additional needs in this area surfaced. Children continued to come to school hungry so breakfast programs, brown bag lunches and community kitchens were introduced in some Prince Albert community schools to respond to these needs (Addendum 1, p. 2). Presently there is a range of programs in Prince Albert community schools that responds to the unique needs of each school community. There are two different types of programs operating:

- Snack Programs refer to daily snack programs, which are provided in all schools and identified for funding through the Saskatchewan Community Schools initiatives and paid for through grants from the Department of Education.
- Nutrition Programs refer to all other initiatives to meet child and community food security and nutrition needs, which are organized through Community Schools and funded through program specific grants, Social Services and other funding sources including inkind contributions.

There is a short fall of funding in the first category of between 13-18 cents per child per day. The longevity and sustainability of funds in the second category is questionable, and the paperwork required to maintain the funding is burdensome. (Stupnikoff, 2002, Addendum 2, p. 1-4).

There are eight elementary community schools in the city (5 in the public system and 3 in the separate system) that provide access to feeding programs (universal snack program and a range of nutrition programs in each school) is as follows:

- 167 Pre-Kindergarten students;
- 289 Kindergarten students; and
- 330 First Grade students.

In total 786 of the total Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 1 population of 1346 in the city have access to feeding programs – 58% of the children in the city of Prince Albert.

School nutrition programs are located in neighbourhoods identified by the Social Index as having a number of potential challenges. A significant socio-economic challenge for Prince Albert's higher-risk neighbourhoods is poverty; a challenge that makes it more difficult for families to provide sufficient quantity and quality of food for their children. The community and its schools are equally challenged to address the food security issues of families.

In Prince Albert, the Child Nutrition Sub-Committee of the Community Network Coalition has been addressing the issue of child nutrition for several years. This committee has made the following conclusions about child nutrition:

- Under-nutrition costs far more than the diminished well-being of children;
- Under-nutrition robs children of their human potential as adults;
- The longer and more severe the malnutrition, the greater the cost to human services agencies; and
- Investments in child nutrition will have a substantial long-term economic gain for society.

The Child Nutrition Sub-Committee examined literature from the fields of education and health care, and identified the following characteristics of poorly nourished children:

- Low energy levels;
- Late or absent more frequently;
- Apathetic;
- Disinterested;
- Irritable or hyperactive;
- Poor concentration;
- Low self-esteem; and
- Poor social skills.

Currently, schools do not have sufficient funds to implement a complete school nutrition program. Funding for the school nutrition program is currently provided by Saskatchewan Education, school boards, national foundations, and Saskatchewan Social Services. A fully funded school nutrition program would cost $0.52 per child per day. The current funding level is approximately $0.36 per child per day, and this funding is only available for Community Schools. In addition, under this current system, school staff are frequently required to make applications to various organizations for funds.

In order to provide an equitable and uniform school-based child nutrition program in Prince Albert, a provincial or even national organizational framework is needed to oversee the nutrition of children.

The Dental Health Status of young children is also an indicator of their nutrition and overall health status. In Saskatchewan there are two comprehensive dental surveys of children in three grades: Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 6. The results of the Kindergarten and First Grade populations will be discussed.

In the 1993-1994 school year 807 Kindergarten children in the Prince Albert Health District were screened who had an average of 2.17 decayed, missing due to decay, and filled teeth (DMFT) per child whereas in 1998-1999 school year 760 Kindergarten children were screened and had an average DMFT of 2.38 per child. In Kindergarten 54% of the clients in 1993-1994 had no decay or treatment evidence and this stayed at similar levels in 1998-1999.

Grade 1 children (852 in 1993-1994 and 916 in 1998-1999), on the other hand, had an average DMFT per child of 2.85 in 1993-1994 and 2.80 in 1998-1999. The percentage of clients with no decay or treatment evident rose from 42.61 to 43.67 during this five year period. For both age levels Prince Albert had almost 3% higher incidence of decay and treatment than the provincial average.

During 2000-2001 186 children from 11 preschools and daycares were screened with an average DMFT per child of 2.49 – significantly higher than Kindergarten level children but less than first grade children. Fifty percent of the clients had no decay or treatment evident which is higher than first grade but less than Kindergarten averages. There are no provincial level comparisons as yet.

These screening surveys indicate that about half the Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade population have significant dental health issues some of which arise from poor nutrition and dental habits and others from lack of dental care. Each of these is significantly influenced by economic variables.

The community will continue to examine food security issues in light of the serious consequences of child malnutrition and the evidence that child hunger is a reality in Prince Albert.

Local Initiatives Related to Community Collaboration and Resource Allocation

Regional Intersectoral Committee

The Prince Albert Regional Intersectoral Committee (RIC) is comprised of representatives from a cross-section of provincial government departments and agencies. The committee's role is to support local, community-based initiatives that use existing resources to deliver integrated programs. In general terms, the Regional Intersectoral Committee:

- Encourages the development of local interagency committees;
- Develops and supports local strategies to overcome barriers to interagency collaboration;
- Furthers collaboration and service integration;
- Facilitates partnerships between government, non-government and third party organizations;
- Participates in local needs assessment processes;
- Participates in activities associated with the Integrated Case Management Handbook and the other Human Service Handbooks; and
- Continues to respond, through both regional and local action, to children's issues as well as to the needs of other target populations (e.g. women in poverty, education and training needs of young adults, and seniors)

(Adapted from Government of Saskatchewan, 1998).

The Prince Albert Regional Intersectoral Committee will be a key organization in facilitating UEY's Community Action Process (putting research into action).

Community Schools

Neighbourhoods and communities in Saskatchewan that have identified socio-economic risk factors are eligible to have their school designated as a Community School by the Government of Saskatchewan. The

Community School designation brings additional funds to allow the school to undertake community development activities, nutrition programs, integrated human services and a learning program that is responsive to children and youth at risk. The foundation policy document for Community Schools, *Building Communities of Hope*, provides the following overview of Community Schools:

> "ommunity Schools are founded upon a tradition of community education, which in turn has its roots in community development. Community Schools build strong relationships with their community members and organizations and work closely with families. These close ties serve to improve educational opportunities and programs and to strengthen the communities in which the schools are located. Community Schools recognize that the difficulties children experience in school are often the result of circumstances that originate in the home or the community. Their programs take into account the cultural and socio-economic life experiences of the students and provides the wide range of supports needed for children to learn (page 4).

In the City of Prince Albert, nine schools offer Community School programs and several other schools are eligible for Community School designation if funding were available. **Map 13** shows the location of Prince Albert's Community Schools.

Community Schools are located in neighbourhoods identified by the Social Index as presenting some risk to children and their families. However, the findings of this report indicate that several other neighbourhoods should have their schools designated as Community Schools. Therefore, additional funds for Community School designation in Prince Albert would be appropriate.

The information presented earlier on Integrated School-Linked Services describes the advantages of locating human services in neighbourhoods rather than consolidating services in a central location. Schools and other community centres could be examined as the most appropriate locations for some human services.

Wraparound

The Saskatchewan Rivers School Division, with funding from Saskatchewan Education, is undertaking a pilot project to study the effectiveness of the "wraparound process" for integrated case management.

Wraparound is designed to provide a comprehensive and integrated framework for meeting the needs of children, youth and their families. Kamradt, Kostan and Pina (1999) provide a concise definition of the wraparound process:

> (The wraparound) approach focuses on identifying what children and families need, building on their strengths and creating plans of care that are highly individualized, comprehensive in the services available, and flexible to meet changing needs (page 225).

The wraparound process of integrated case management offers a promising new way of delivering human services to high-risk populations and will likely be explored further by the community as it prepares its action plans.

Acting on the Evidence from the Community Mapping Study

The findings of this Community Mapping Report remain academic until the community is engaged in planning and implementing action plans that are informed by the information presented in this and other applied research projects. Engaging a

community in acting upon applied research is a significant community development process. Saskatchewan Education defines community development as "a learning process where the group dynamic develops to the extent that people are comfortable and confident in the value of their contribution. The group becomes 'animated' at the point where they are motivated or inspired to create new ideas and discover how to steer their social and economic affairs in new directions" (Saskatchewan Education, 1996, page 53).

How can the community be engaged in this community development process?

In June of 2001, the Prince Albert Regional Intersectoral Committee established the Early Childhood Development Management Committee. Although the roles and responsibilities of this committee have yet to be fully developed, the following outline provides a brief overview.

The Early Childhood Development Committee will provide leadership and ensure participation in the planning, development, implementation, delivery and monitoring of a broad-based regional Early Childhood Development plan. This plan would encompass the Understanding the Early Years Project, the new federal/provincial initiative called the Kids First Program (see the box below for a brief description of this program), and other relevant local initiatives.

The membership of the Early Childhood Development Committee includes decision-makers from the following key organizations:

- City of Prince Albert;
- Métis Nation of Saskatchewan—Western Region 2;
- Parkland Health District;
- Prince Albert Grand Council—Urban Services;
- Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division;
- Prince Albert Health District;
- Prince Albert Housing Authority;
- Saskatchewan Education;
- Saskatchewan Justice;
- Saskatchewan Rivers School Division;
- Saskatchewan Social Services; and
- Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology—Woodland Campus.

Both the UEY Project and the Kids First Program propose that the community develop a comprehensive action plan for children – an evidence-based plan that is informed by the information contained in this report and other relevant community data. Thus, the Early Childhood Development Committee will facilitate the creation of a Prince Albert and area action plan for children.

In conclusion, it is troubling to reconcile the fact that children are facing hunger in a province that harvests 54% of the wheat grown in Canada. It is further ironic that in a land with so much economic prosperity, many children and their families still live in poverty. The hopeful news is that the community of Prince Albert and the Province of Saskatchewan has the economic capability to continue the work to alleviate child hunger and poverty. It is also hopeful news that the individuals and agencies providing human services to children and their families in Prince Albert are increasingly able to work in a collaborative and purposeful manner. Given sufficient resources, the human service community in Prince Albert has shown it can make a difference in the lives of children. This group has also demonstrated an ability to adapt to changing population needs and to embrace new and more effective methods of delivering service to children and their families.

Kids First Program

The Kids First Program is a new initiative for high-risk families with young children in Saskatchewan. It incorporates a strategy for flexible local implementation and decision-making within given program parameters.

The Kids First Program will be available to families identified as high risk, families that typically are hard to reach and rarely access programs and services. Often they receive little or no prenatal care, have poor prenatal nutrition, do not access health services, and have complex socio-economic issues, such as substance abuse, violence, poverty, lack of education, substandard housing, etc. An assessment process will be used to identify families for the program.

The Kids First Program is not a stand-alone program. New resources are designed to build upon existing programs and services whenever possible. Partnerships are at many levels and coordinated, integrated services are keys to success.

Targeted high needs communities (such as Prince Albert) will improve childhood outcomes through an array of integrated services, including, at a minimum:

- Aggressive case finding and prenatal screening focused on the prevention of FAS/FAE;
- A universal hospital-based screening program for newborns and their families;
- Assessment;
- Enhanced early learning opportunities;
- Enhanced child care opportunities;
- A range of community supports including literacy, parenting and nutrition programs; and
- Dedicated mental health and addiction treatment services.

Government of Saskatchewan (2001)

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